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President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 59 (*continued*)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. Donigi (Papua New Guinea): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the following Pacific Islands Forum countries represented here at the United Nations: Australia, Fiji, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and my own country, Papua New Guinea.

The fact that this is one of the most important items on the agenda of the General Assembly is well attested to by the very large number of speakers in the debate. The high degree of participation is also in keeping with the decision of our leaders at the Millennium Summit to intensify efforts to achieve comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects.

As we all know, progress on reforming the Security Council has been slow. It is a very complex issue. We believe, however, that the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council, especially with respect to the working methods of the Council, have made a positive contribution. We now, for example, have much improved access to briefings and debates in the Security Council, especially since the adoption of the note by the President of the Security Council contained in document S/1999/1291 of 30 December last year. With that alone, the Working Group has proved its worth.

The key features of the Open-ended Working Group are its transparency and its open-endedness. That is so because, whatever the eventual outcome in terms of a reform package, it must have the widest possible support among the membership. Resolution 48/26, which was adopted by consensus, speaks of the importance of reaching general agreement. Consensus on an issue as complex as this will probably not be possible, but it is in the interest of all Member States to contribute constructively and flexibly to the work of the Open-ended Working Group as it strives to build general agreement on a comprehensive package of reforms.

Where indeed do we go from here? Even our own Pacific Islands Forum group does not have a common view on some major aspects of reform, such as enlargement. We all certainly believe that the Council needs to be enlarged to make it more representative. But the devil lies in the details. We believe, however, that the group of 10 countries — Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Portugal and Slovenia — got it right almost three years ago in a paper they submitted to the Working Group. Among other things, they said that

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> "General agreement on a comprehensive reform package is unlikely to be achieved without an understanding on the future scope and application of the veto". (*A/52/47, annex XVI, para. 1*)

We recall that at the Millennium Summit the Chairperson of the third round table was greeted with particular acclamation when he reported on the strong view in his round table that there was a need to curtail the veto. In the Open-ended Working Group, few dispute that general agreement has been reached on that important part of any comprehensive reform package. We suggest therefore, that in order to move things forward this point needs to be further distilled as a matter of priority.

On a separate but related matter, I should note that at the meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum held at Tarawa, Republic of Kiribati, from 27 to 30 October 2000, Forum leaders agreed to explore the creation of a separate regional group of Pacific States within the United Nations. We are conscious that the present regional group system, which has long outlived its usefulness, was a creature of Security Council reform in the 1960s. Perhaps reconfiguration of the regional groups, possibly making them smaller with a more effective policy coordination role, would be another signpost to the future and a means of cutting the Gordian knot we currently face.

I wish now to address the Assembly as the representative of Papua New Guinea. Papua New Guinea supports the following views. First, we support the view that there must be an enlargement of both the permanent and the non-permanent membership of the Security Council.

Secondly, we believe that small States should be considered as equal partners in the development of initiatives to secure international peace and security for all humankind, regardless of wealth, size and sophistication of military, on-ground involvement in peacekeeping, or financial contribution to the work of the United Nations. In this regard, we believe that small States can contribute objectively on international peace and security issues without being hung up about subjective elements. Thus, small States should not end up being marginalized in any Security Council reform.

Thirdly, Papua New Guinea believes that we can make substantive progress by developing a procedure for reaching agreement on the nature of each issue, on an issue-by-issue basis, bearing in mind that delegations have the right to hold reservations regarding the question of the veto. We urge members to consider this as a more constructive approach than the holistic one. This view is even consistent with the efforts of some delegations to promote results-based budgeting for the United Nations. In that regard, Papua New Guinea joined the other Pacific Islands Forum members in making a regional statement supporting results-based budgeting in the Fifth Committee last month. It would seem to us that a results-based budgeting approach cannot be promoted if we continue to seek wider agreement on all fronts during the debate on Security Council reform. It can be achieved, in our view, only if we set certain benchmarks for ourselves. I put it to the Assembly that those benchmarks must be established on the basis of a step-by-step approach rather than a holistic approach.

In respect to the Forum leaders' agreement to explore a separate regional grouping, Papua New Guinea believes that the current Charter of the United Nations reflects the bipolar politics that existed in the 1950s.

If indeed the future of the world will be based on the absence of a bipolar power syndrome, then the whole regional grouping within the United Nations system must of necessity be reviewed as well. It is in that respect that the Foreign Minister of Papua New Guinea, when addressing this Assembly in September 1999, stated that there is a need to reconfigure the geographical landscape of the United Nations.

In such a reconfiguration, Papua New Guinea would anticipate that each subregion will be represented on the Security Council. What should therefore be considered is some discussion on the composition of the subregions. This would form the basis of an objective discussion of the size of the expansion of the Security Council. The implications for world peace and security would therefore be a primary function of the countries of the subregion in the first instance. It would also mean that the Security Council would become engaged when all avenues for reaching a peaceful outcome at the subregional level have been exhausted. We believe that this is the only way that small States can conceivably play an important role in international peace and security issues.

Mr. Jayanama (Thailand): At the outset, Mr. President, let me join others who have spoken before me in expressing our appreciation for the work

done by your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab of Namibia, as Chairman, and by Ambassadors Hans Dahlgren of Sweden and John de Saram of Sri Lanka, as co-Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council during the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. I am confident that, under your keen interest and active leadership, we will make progress.

During the United Nations Millennium Summit, our leaders reiterated the urgent need to reform the Security Council. It is therefore clear that, as we enter the new century, the Security Council, as the primary body entrusted with the indispensable responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, must enhance its legitimacy, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency to deal with the increased and complex new challenges. To achieve this new status, a comprehensive reform package needs to be addressed and agreed upon. The package basically involves three well-known elements: the Council's size and composition; its decision-making process; and its working methods. My delegation would like to discuss these three elements one by one and then raise some points which may assist us in moving ahead.

First of all, on the question of the size and composition of the Security Council, which is known as cluster I, the crux of the issue is: Should expansion take place in both permanent and non-permanent categories, and if so how many new seats should there be and from where? There is already general agreement that the Council should be expanded. The Secretary-General himself drew attention to this when he mentioned in his millennium report that:

> "Based on the distribution of power and alignments in 1945, the composition of the Council today does not fully represent either the character or the needs of our globalized world." (*A/54/2000, para. 44*)

Thailand fully associates itself with that remark and believes that expansion should involve both permanent and non-permanent categories, with the proviso that new permanent members should include developing countries. While attaching importance to the principle of equitable geographical representation, we are also of the view that new permanent members should have the ability and desire to share and make substantive contributions, financially and politically, to the United Nations. By this criteria, we see that Japan is a worthy candidate to be a new permanent member. Nevertheless, before we move ahead on this issue, we need to ask the following question: Do current proposals offer equitable and practical solutions on the new composition?

Secondly, on the decision-making process of the Council, to the overwhelming membership of the United Nations the heart of the problem is in what form the veto should be modified and whether new permanent members should be accorded veto power. With the sole exception of the permanent five, Member States find the veto and its present practice outdated and unacceptable, as it runs counter to the democratic character of the United Nations. On this issue, we should ask why the permanent five need to retain their veto power in the present form.

Thirdly, on the question of the working methods of the Security Council, also known as cluster II, there has been good progress, unlike on the other two elements. We, for one, certainly welcome the fact that some of the proposals have already been taken up by the Council. Cluster II issues have moved ahead because they pose less of a threat to the permanent five's power structure and do not involve amending the Charter. Nevertheless, because the working methods are more transparent and open, they are very important to all non-members of the Security Council, which represent more that 90 per cent of the membership of the United Nations.

This is already the eighth year of our deliberations. Even now, it is regrettable to note that the Working Group at its last session was unable to agree on any substantive recommendation for the General Assembly to consider. The question that many people are asking is: How long shall this exercise go on without progress? This question was asked when I was a Vice-Chairman of the Working Group two years ago and is still being asked today.

Certainly, the current stalemate is not due to a lack of ideas and proposals, for since our work began we have seen many innovative proposals. But now that the options are already on the table, we should try to seek answers to the questions that I posed earlier. Otherwise, we will continue to go over the same ground as in previous years without moving any closer to our reform's objectives.

The way to move forward on the issue of the size and composition of the Security Council is to find a formula that ensures greater equity in the expansion of the Security Council. We need to have a more equitable sharing of the cake. We need to reach a general agreement on a formula for dividing the cake more equally among all players, including a group of important large and medium-sized countries that feel they will not be getting enough of the new cake relative to their substantive contribution to the United Nations. For this equity to come about, a reorientation of thinking regarding the formula of dividing the new cake is necessary.

As to the issue of the veto, it is a question of recognizing and modernizing one's moral and political responsibility. Responsibility here means that those who have the veto should demonstrate their willingness to limit their use of it. Indeed, this responsibility is implicit in the Charter when it speaks of the Security Council as an organ which acts on behalf of all of us. In fact, most of us are realistic enough to accept that the abolition of the veto may not be feasible at this stage, but many of us entertain the hope that the permanent five would at least pledge publicly to use the veto only in regard to actions under Chapter VII of the Charter. This could be a major breakthrough in moving the overall process forward. This magnanimous decision will not only collectively enhance the permanent five's moral and political standing, but also lay down the basis for denying the veto to new permanent members should we agree to have them.

The last and maybe most important factor is leadership — more specifically leadership of the permanent five. Given their privileged position, it is incumbent upon them to exercise the leadership that is expected of them if they really wish the Security Council reform to move forward. In the final analysis, everybody knows that in the Security Council unanimity of the permanent five can move the world. Agreement within the permanent five would pave the way for all other players to play their part in a more realistic way in reaching a truly comprehensive and balanced compromised package.

All the above elements are indeed necessary for a possible comprehensive package, but perhaps not sufficient. In the last seven years decision making in our Working Group has been based on consensus. We need to ensure that its deliberations are not hindered by its working methods. Many delegations, including the Bureau of the Working Group at its last session, have already suggested that our working methods need to be reviewed. Given that the Working Group is the focus of efforts to achieve a comprehensive package on Security Council reform, improving the working methods of the Working Group itself may well turn out, with the necessary political will, to be the decisive issue in facilitating progress.

Finally, the fifty-third session of the General Assembly already passed resolution 53/30 by consensus, thus translating the "general agreement" mentioned in General Assembly resolution 48/26, into numbers — in other words, any resolution or decision on Security Council reform needs at least a two-thirds majority of the Member States. Since by that decision, two-thirds majority voting is foreseen by the General Assembly on this important issue, should we not then proceed on this basis in the Working Group as well?

Mr. Paolillo (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The process that we have undertaken to reform the Security Council has been characterized by the somewhat paradoxical fact that although there is a unity of purpose that we all share virtually unanimously, we have nevertheless been incapable after such lengthy and difficult negotiations of reaching an agreement on how to achieve our objectives.

Certainly we have acquired in-depth knowledge about the problem, and we have made some progress, such as the elaboration of rules on the practices and working methods of the Council and the adoption during the fifty-third session of the General Assembly of resolution 53/30, establishing the necessary majorities for decision-making on this matter. Nevertheless, we believe that on the fundamental questions, we are still far from reaching agreement — this despite the generous and intelligent efforts of the President of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab and Ambassadors John de Saram of Sri Lanka and Hans Dahlgren of Sweden, to whom we would like to express our deepest gratitude.

This failure should not, however, discourage us. The unity of purpose remains. We all want to reform the Security Council to adapt it to today's realities and needs. These circumstances, in our opinion, justify the pursuit of our efforts to achieve our objectives and to continue, within the framework of the Working Group,

the search for a formula for reform that can rely on the widespread support of the international community.

On the other hand, however, we have had seven years of continuous debate and negotiations, which without a doubt have been intellectually enriching but sterile when it comes to producing results. These seven years, in the view of Uruguay, illustrate eloquently the fact that if we wish to achieve progress, we must broaden our basis of negotiation and begin to consider other alternatives.

We believe that some of the proposals that have been discussed over the last seven years have already exhausted their potential to serve as a basis for agreement and that it would be pointless to insist on these proposals. I am referring in particular to the proposals to increase the number of permanent members, that is the privileged members having permanent seats and veto rights. Regardless of the intrinsic value that these proposals may have as institutional solutions, experience is teaching us that it will not be possible to obtain on these proposals the general agreement that must underpin the reforms. We must acknowledge quite simply that these proposals serve no further purpose and that the time has come to set them aside and to attempt to continue the debate on a new basis.

We agree with those who have said prior to us that the time has come to put to the test our creativity and imagination and to begin to explore new avenues. We are convinced that it is possible to devise new institutional formulas that can satisfy the interests of all, including the interests of those who wish to participate more extensively in the functioning of the Council.

Any formula that is put to us for consideration will nevertheless, have to respect certain basic principles. I would like to refer to some of these principles:

The first one is the principle of sovereign equality of States. One of the most important manifestations of this principle, enshrined in Article 2, paragraph one of the United Nations Charter, is equal representation and equal rights in and before international organizations. The only acceptable formulas for reform will be those that avoid generating new inequalities amongst the members of the Organization.

The existence of institutional inequalities in an intergovernmental organization is a divisive factor that hinder the smooth functioning of the institution. It also undermines the cohesion of the organization. I believe that it is worthwhile recalling the example of the Organization of American States, a regional organization amongst those referred to in Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. We should recall that in the Organization of American States, which takes up problems of peace and security in its region, there are no institutional differences, and all of its members – from the most powerful State in the world to the smallest island States of the Caribbean – have the same rights and the same obligations. There is no doubt that this has fostered integration in the region and the practice of effective continental solidarity.

Moreover, respect for the principle of sovereign equality of States naturally excludes any position that would lead to the broadening or consolidation of the use of the veto. The veto right in the Security Council was negotiated and incorporated into the United Nations system as an instrument of power. Fifty-five years of experience confirms this perception because during this period the veto has never been used to defend collective interests but rather to satisfy the national interests of the permanent members. Consequently, we must pursue our aim of eliminating or at least regulating its use.

The second principle to which Uruguay attaches great importance is the representative nature taken on by those members of the United Nations when they become members of the Security Council. According to Article 24 of the Charter of San Francisco, the Security Council, in carrying out its functions, acts on behalf of all members of the Organization, who conferred upon this organ the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. The Security Council must increasingly become less a forum in which its members present the positions of their respective Governments. Instead, its members should increasingly act as the executive body that carries out the will of the entire international community, the collective will of all Members of the Organization.

Thirdly, reforms should not adversely affect the efficiency of the Council. The Security Council is not a deliberative body; it is essentially an executive body. It should adopt decisions quickly when circumstances warrant. There can be no doubt that there is a logical and practically singular response to the need to make

the Council more representative, to increase the number of its members. However, that increase must be carefully determined in order that the Council can be convened quickly, that its discussions can take place quickly, and that its decisions can be adopted and carried out quickly.

To sum up, we understand that we must begin a new stage in this process of reform. That phase should be a continuation of our previous negotiations, but this time without redundancies and unproductive positions. In embarking upon that new phase, we believe that there are reasons to be moderately optimistic. We share a common objective. In the course of the last seven years we have acquired in-depth knowledge of the problem and its implications. Above all, we now have a clear vision of the limits within which we must operate; that is to say, we have a clear view of the things to which we must not aspire. I trust we have all learned the lessons of those seven years, and that we are all aware that in this new phase we must adopt a more realistic and flexible attitude if we truly want to achieve our common purpose.

Mr. Lewis (Antigua and Barbuda): I stand to speak on behalf of the States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and to make clear that our position has not changed from the statement delivered by Ambassador Samuel R. Insanally of Guyana on 24 June 1999.

By and large, CARICOM supports the position of the Non-Aligned Movement with regard to a balance that will include both developed and developing countries. CARICOM remains open to negotiations in an effort to find an eventual solution, while emphasizing that the underlying motivation should be based on the principle of equitable representation. The principle of equity is one which, for many reasons, CARICOM wishes to stress.

With regard to the contentious issue of the veto, CARICOM has insisted that it is linked directly to the matter of increasing the number of permanent members. In the belief that there should be no discrimination whatsoever between permanent members, we have posited that this privilege should be extended to any new entrants in this category. Of course, our fundamental view is that the veto is now anachronistic and anti-democratic, and should therefore be abolished. Given, however, the political reality, we are prepared to consider, for the time being, a restriction on the use of the veto to issues falling under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

With regard to having periodic reviews pertaining to both the composition and functions of the Security Council, we consider this idea to have great merit, and some of our States have proposed that this should happen every 15 years.

In concluding, CARICOM wishes to make it abundantly clear that while engaging in this exercise for a more democratic and effective Council, we must likewise explore to its fullest extent the role of the General Assembly under the United Nations Charter in strengthening international peace and security.

Ms. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan): The historic Millennium Summit played a significant role in raising the awareness of the international community about the future role of the United Nations in bringing about a better tomorrow for all mankind. The eminent gathering of heads of State or Government made a great contribution to the promotion of peace, security, social development and human rights. The world leaders unanimously adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which is aimed at reforming the United Nations and its capability to respond effectively to the challenges of the new century and to provide the framework for joint efforts to maintain international peace and security. That document notes, inter alia, the necessity to intensify the efforts of the international community to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects.

In this respect, my delegation believes strongly that the debate on this issue has been going on for too long. For nearly seven years, we have not been able to take a responsible collective decision. The expression "lost time is never found" is most appropriate in our circumstances. As the whole Assembly is well aware, the Open-ended Working Group established to consider all aspects of the question of an increase in the membership of the Security Council began its deliberations in January 1994. At that time we were all confident that it would be a very productive process that could make a significant contribution towards achieving the main objectives. To our regret and great disappointment, the Working Group has failed to elaborate a unanimous approach on a package of reforms, including the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council.

Time requires all of us to act in unity to assume the responsibility for the future of the United Nations and for the future of the Council in particular, as that body is mandated under the Charter of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security. My delegation believes that we have to intensify the negotiation process in the framework of the Working Group in order to fulfil our commitment to make the Security Council a relevant and effective factor in the present-day world.

Kazakhstan has not changed its position with regard to the question of Security Council reform, which has been voiced at the highest level more than once during the last seven years. The Council should be more representative. Its work should be more accountable and more transparent. We stand for the expansion of the Security Council in both categories of its membership, on the basis of equitable geographical representation and respect for the sovereign equality of all United Nations Member States. Kazakhstan also supports the inclusion of Germany and Japan as permanent members of the Council, taking into consideration the substantial contributions of those States to the United Nations budget and the significant roles they play in the multifaceted activities of the United Nations.

We also support permanent membership of the Council for major developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and an increase in the number of non-permanent members. On the issue of the veto, the use of the veto, like that of any other powerful instrument, should be restricted. Its application to decisions under the provisions of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter should be linked to the principle of accountability.

Peacekeeping operations are a vital tool for the Security Council in carrying out its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The effectiveness of peacekeeping has been a focus of the Security Council in recent years. Recently the Security Council adopted a resolution on peacekeeping operations which clearly indicated the necessity of strengthening the activities of the Security Council in that field; that in turn implies a pressing need to reform the Council as soon as possible.

The twentieth century was marked by two world wars, the cold war and the arms race. The international community continues to experience great suffering caused by conflicts, violence and discrimination. Since the beginning of our discussion of Security Council reform, the world social and economic situation has worsened. That sends a clear message that there is an urgent need for the United Nations and its Member States to make a continuous effort to strengthen the role of the Security Council in the twenty-first century, seizing the opportunity offered by the political momentum seen at the Millennium Summit.

Mr. Bakoniarivo (Madagascar) (*spoke in French*): My delegation joins previous speakers in conveying its appreciation and gratitude to the members of the Bureau of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council for the commitment they have demonstrated over the past year.

My delegation attaches particular importance to the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council because of the Council's great importance for the maintenance of international peace and security. Although we should welcome progress with respect to the Council's working methods — such as the increased number of public meetings, post-meeting briefings and summaries provided by outgoing Presidents — the persistence of seemingly unresolvable differences on substantive matters such as the size and composition of the Council and the right of veto justifies the concern and frustration that have been expressed by the majority of delegations, and which my delegation shares.

The restructuring of the Security Council is an inevitable part of any reform exercise the Organization may undertake. Enhancement of the Council's credibility through far-reaching reform should be based on the principles of democracy, the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical representation. Like a majority of other Member States, Madagascar believes that maintaining the status quo can only harm the functioning of the Council and could cause a crisis of confidence in the ability of the United Nations to safeguard the collective security system established by the Charter.

In view of the changes that have taken place since the establishment of the United Nations, my delegation unreservedly supports the expansion of the permanent

and the non-permanent membership of the Security Council in order better to reflect the new configuration of international relations.

In that context, Africa — which represents not only the majority of Member States but also the majority of the issues debated in the Council — should be better represented in both categories of Council membership. The anomalous situation in which Africa is not among the permanent members of the Security Council must be put right in the interest of equity, justice and the Organization's credibility. In the new millennium, Africa should not merely be the object of Security Council resolutions; it should be a responsible participant in the maintenance of international peace and security. My delegation takes this opportunity to reaffirm that peace is the business of us all — large and small, rich and poor — and that lasting peace can be attained only by pooling the efforts of all members of the international community.

Moreover, my delegation is convinced that more involvement and greater responsibility for African countries in the maintenance of international peace and security, through membership of the Security Council, would promote the spread of a culture of peace throughout the continent.

In the light of those considerations, my delegation endorsed the June 1997 Harare Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on reform of the Security Council. That Declaration calls for democratization and equitable geographical distribution in an enlarged Security Council, and expansion of the Council to a total of 26 members in both categories of membership, of which Africa would be allocated at least two permanent seats and five non-permanent seats. We also remain committed to the position of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement as stated at their 1998 Durban summit.

The right of veto is among the most complex and controversial questions in the exercise of restructuring the Security Council. Many oppose retaining a tool which is viewed as anachronistic, undemocratic and contrary to the principle of the sovereign equality of States, on which the Organization is based. As the United Nations is guarantor and trustee of universal values, its organs, especially the Security Council, must provide a reliable benchmark for democratic principles. My delegation is by no means unaware of the political considerations inherent in the right of veto, but we believe that it is essential and urgent to rethink the way it is used, in the light of its negative impact on the Council's ability to play its Charter role. The use of the veto should be limited to action under Chapter VII of the Charter, pending its complete abolition. In the view of my delegation, the proposal by which a State would be obliged to explain to the General Assembly why it had vetoed a draft resolution deserves careful consideration by the Working Group.

The delegation of Madagascar is aware that Security Council reform is a lengthy and difficult exercise. But we hope that we will be able at this session of the General Assembly to make decisive progress on pending issues thanks to our determination to address this sensitive matter with constructive, realistic ideas and with fresh political will in keeping with the spirit of the new millennium.

Mr. Erdös (Hungary): My delegation welcomes the discussion on this agenda item in a plenary meeting of the General Assembly. The issue of the reform of the Security Council remains one of the key questions of United Nations reform and continues to be at the centre of the attention of the Member States. The Millennium Summit and the general debate at the present session of the General Assembly, during which an overwhelming majority of Members spoke about the importance of this question and underlined the necessity of making progress in it, bear witness to this most eloquently.

The Foreign Minister of Hungary also stated that recent world events have made the hope of seeing the United Nations adapt itself to the realities of our times into an imperative that can no longer give way to evasive action or hesitation. The Minister added that that includes, inter alia, the reform of the Security Council, which is necessary to reinforce the credibility and effectiveness of our world Organization.

Hungary's position on the issues related to the reform of the Security Council has been laid out in the form of both national statements and joint declarations delivered by the Group of 10, of which Hungary is part. A Security Council capable of carrying out its responsibilities effectively is of the utmost importance to the international community. It has been said and repeated over and over, and it remains true that, in order to achieve this aim, we need a Council that reflects the new political and economic realities of the world — one that operates in a more democratic and

transparent manner and hence enjoys wider support among the Member States and greater legitimacy in the eyes of the world's peoples. It is all the more indispensable to act with this objective in mind in view of the state of our planet today, which only increases the responsibilities of the Security Council in discharging its obligations under the Charter.

Hungary supports the enlargement of the Security Council in both categories of membership. It is our strong belief that an increase in the number of permanent members of the Security Council — by way of adding to it industrialized countries and countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean — would better reflect the changed international political and economic landscape and reinforce the credibility of that important decision-making body. The ever-growing membership of the United Nations equally justifies the efforts to increase the number of non-permanent members. This clearly has to be matched with the need to maintain and strengthen the efficiency of the Council's operation. We are fully aware of the complexities inherent in the enlargement effort, which is one more reason why we should all be open and receptive to any proposal likely to help us move forward, including periodic renewals of arrangements decided.

If we look back over the past decade, we have to recognize that we set out in a direction never tried before and managed to achieve some notable changes in the way the Security Council presently operates. But the improvement of the decision-making process remains a task requiring further attention and an innovative approach from the international community. The right of veto and, in particular, its exercise without limitations continue to be challenged by a large proportion of the United Nations membership. Taking into account the highly sensitive character of this issue, we have to continue exploring all avenues in order to find pragmatic ways and means of bringing us all closer to new possibilities in this regard. We should not surrender to frustration, which is understandably widespread amongst us in the respect.

We regret that — in spite of some progress — the Working Group entrusted with the question of the reform of the Security Council has been unable to reach agreement on major issues before it. Since we believe that United Nations reform cannot be complete without the reform of the Security Council, it is our intention to join other delegations in pushing for further efforts which could, through practical and realistic steps, enable us to find solutions to these outstanding issues.

Hungary was pleased that the Millennium Declaration called for the intensification of efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. We believe that it is our common responsibility to use the momentum of an emerging broad support for Security Council reform to meet the challenges ahead and to avoid complacency and a business-as-usual mentality in pursuing our activities in the Working Group. We should be aware that the alternative to these activities would merely preserve the status quo and freeze a situation that has so long been obsolete.

My delegation views your personal involvement, Mr. President, in this endeavour as a right response to the request of Member States to inject more dynamism into and to seek new ways and means to advance our much-needed work in that Working Group. In this undertaking, you can count on my delegation's full support.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): I would like to begin, Sir, with a word of congratulation and admiration for the work done by your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab of Namibia, and by Ambassadors John de Saram and Hans Dahlgren, the two co-Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group. The progress made in the Working Group is to a very large extent the result of their tireless efforts, their diplomatic skill and their patience.

Among numerous goals and tasks that our leaders committed themselves to in the Millennium Declaration is the need to intensify efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. This commitment was restated in the majority of the statements made in the general debate of the fifty-fifth session last September. There obviously continues to exist a sense of the urgent need to adjust the Security Council to the realities of the world and of the United Nations. In addition, the launch of the process of reform back in 1993 was also the expression of the disappointment and dissatisfaction of the membership with the Security Council. This remains a major driving force for the reform. The questions of the authority, legitimacy and effectiveness of the Council have been constantly raised and their relevance is very much alive among the Council's members themselves.

From all these needs practical proposals have arisen for expansion in the membership of the Security Council to represent more adequately the growing number of United Nations Members. Furthermore, specific proposals on the enlargement of the Council in permanent and non-permanent membership have been made to give a particular role to those Members of the United Nations able and willing to make a particular contribution to the work of the Security Council. A large portion of the membership, including Slovenia, supports the enlargement in both categories. On the other hand, a number of Member States are not yet ready to take that final position on the questions of the size and composition of the Council. The discussions, exchanges of views and arguments should therefore probably continue and intensify. We encourage you, Mr. President, to take an active role in these discussions and negotiations and to use all ways, means and methods at your disposal.

In this context, I cannot fail to mention that, before final arrangements on the enlargement are made for non-permanent members, careful calculation will be necessary in order to ensure the adequate and equitable geographic representation of all regional groups, including in particular the Eastern European Group, whose membership has doubled in the past few years.

Reform of the Security Council involves, of course, not only enlargement. For the majority of Member States the question of working methods, transparency and decision-making, including the veto, are of at least as much importance. We note with satisfaction several improvements in the working methods of the Council. They have been promoted to a large extent by the discussions in the Working Group and are the Council's answer to the criticism expressed, which again proves the relevance of the continuing discussions in the Working Group.

The Council, as a general rule, does not hold most of its meetings behind closed doors any more. The number of open meetings is growing, even though the practice of holding open debates might need some fine-tuning, since some of the discussions have begun to resemble discussions in the General Assembly. Meetings with troop-contributing countries have recently witnessed some positive changes that provide those countries more adequate participation in the work of the Council. We also welcome greater use of missions of the Security Council to troubled areas and believe that such missions should be used as a tool of preventive diplomacy. We would also like to encourage further innovations in the work of the Security Council, which enhance cooperation between the Council and members of the United Nations.

The transparency of the work of the Council and its President has also increased significantly, even though it varies due to different capabilities and approaches of the presidencies. We would encourage, as much as possible, a unified policy of transparency for the benefit of the general membership. In this context some thought could be given to the possibility of greater use of the Secretariat to assist in the "transparent" tasks of the Presidents. For that purpose the already constrained and overburdened Security Council Affairs Division of the Department of Political Affairs should be significantly strengthened.

One of the very important aspects of the reform relates to the question of veto, and in past discussions several proposals were made in this respect. Further discussion and genuine dialogue need to be pursued and intensified. We hope that they will result in finding a way of limiting the scope and use of veto so as to satisfy the larger membership of the Organization, as well as those who shall continue to have the right to use it.

The reform of the Security Council is a process and not an event. Discussions among the membership, and especially within the Working Group in the past seven years, have led to many changes and improvements, especially with regard to the working methods of the Council and the transparency of its work. Of course, the main goal of the reform — to make the Council more representative, more legitimate and more efficient — still remains to be achieved. The issue of the reform of the Security Council and the amendment of the Charter is one of the most sensitive issues for the Organization. It is therefore wise not to rush into quick solutions, but to intensify discussions and negotiations.

We consider that the conference room papers submitted last year by the Bureau of the Working Group can serve as a starting point for future discussions on the reform.

Mr. Niehaus (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, allow me to congratulate your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia, and Ambassadors John de Saram and Hans Dahlgren for their excellent work and leadership of the

Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council over the last year.

The reform of the Security Council is unquestionably essential to the future of the United Nations. Its success will determine whether humanity will have a mechanism that is effective, democratic, equitable and just to maintain international peace and security. For this reason the heads of State and Government of all Member States of the United Nations agreed, at the Millennium Summit, to intensify their efforts to achieve reform of the Security Council in all its aspects.

Costa Rica is firmly committed to an authentic reform and revitalization of the Security Council. We are fully aware of the constraints, obstacles, errors and blunders that affect the action of this organ. Suffice it to recall, for example, the serious difficulties that were encountered both in Sierra Leone and Timor by the various peacekeeping operations. Authentic reform of the Security Council must avoid a repetition of these misfortunes.

The limits that hamper the work of the Security Council are of diverse origin. To a certain extent, the inefficiency of the Security Council can be attributed to the fact that its present structure does not reflect either the current composition of the international community or the contemporary distribution of power amongst nations.

We believe that the composition of the Security Council must reflect the new realities of international politics in a world that is increasingly globalized and interdependent. It is indispensable that the Security Council should express not only the military capacity of the various actors in the international community, but also their economic influence and moral authority. For this reason, Costa Rica advocates an increase in the number of members of the Security Council in order to allow for greater representation of the developing countries in this body. Similarly, my country looks favourably upon the possibility of creating new permanent seats.

However — and I would like to emphasize this point — an increase in the number of members of the Security Council is only a secondary and subsidiary aspect in the process of reforming and revitalizing this body.

Many of the shortcomings in the Security Council are not due to its structure, but rather to flaws in its working machinery, procedures and decision-making process, as well as to the abuse of the veto right. As the Brahimi report (A/55/305) points out, the difficulties that have assailed the United Nations in recent times are due to a great extent to the fact that:

> "The Security Council and the Member States crafted and supported ambiguous, inconsistent and under-funded mandates and then stood back and watched as they failed." (*A/55/305, para. 266*)

Consequently, true reform of the Security Council must aim at making it a more effective, transparent, representative and democratic organ. Authentic revitalization of this body must guarantee that it can in the future adequately fulfil its primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

The Security Council, by virtue of its primary function, must be a decision-making centre for all measures aimed at preserving or re-establishing peace. It is, therefore, unacceptable for the Council to renounce its responsibilities and functions. Members of the Security Council are responsible for their decisions vis-à-vis the other members of the international community and must be held accountable.

No member of the Security Council should act exclusively on the basis of its own national interests. It is unacceptable for this organ to become a foreign policy instrument for its members. It is not acceptable for the Security Council to ignore situations that demand its attention, on the pretext that some of its members are involved in these situations or that these members do not have a national interest in the region. True reform of the Security Council requires that this organ become, in the future, much more fair, equitable and impartial. For this reason, we believe that we must place limits on the exercise of veto rights.

Moreover, we must ensure that the Security Council does not take over either the functions of the General Assembly or those of the Economic and Social Council. In conformity with the distribution of responsibilities established in the Charter, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council are the competent bodies to implement and coordinate efforts to prevent conflict and build peace. In this context, investments in development, education, health, human rights and democracy are direct investments in future

peace. Consequently, they are as important as the activities of the Security Council.

Small but important advances have been achieved over the last seven years of work on Security Council reform. It is worth noting in particular the significant progress made with regard to the Council's procedures. Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the magnitude of the differences of opinion that still exist. Decisions are still pending with regard to the number, categories and powers of new Council members. Agreement must also be reached on the use and limits of the veto. It is also necessary to agree on reforms relating to the Council's working methods in order to ensure its transparency and legitimacy. We must still agree on a mechanism for a periodic review of the Council.

My country believes that it is desirable to reach general agreement on each and every one of those matters. They are all intimately interrelated and are all indispensable for achieving a genuine, comprehensive reform of the Council.

Some delegations have been pessimistic about the reform process during the course of this debate. My country believes that it is still possible to achieve positive results. We believe that if all nations make a real effort and set realistic objectives, it will be possible to bring the reform process to a successful conclusion. Only in that way will we be able to restructure the Council and make it more just, legitimate, transparent and democratic.

Mr. Orellana Mercado (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): There is no doubt that the subject we are considering today is one of the most important that the General Assembly must address. We would therefore like to make some remarks in the broadest possible constructive spirit, as we believe that the United Nations was founded as a response to the need to safeguard humanity and international peace and security after the devastation of the Second World War.

We must keep in mind that our predecessors in this Organization debated the role that each of its Members should play to save future generations from the scourge of war. Likewise, they also gave broad consideration to all aspects of the equation "peace plus security equals economic and social development". Thus, international peace and security are today, as yesterday, a sine qua non for economic and social development, as they cannot exist without each other. How can we think about fundamental human rights or the protection of freedoms and social justice if we do not enjoy peace, security and socio-economic development? In and of themselves, these considerations require us to shoulder seriously and responsibly the issue of reform and enlargement of the Security Council and its decision-making mechanism.

As a founding Member, Honduras has repeatedly stated that, even if no consensus is reached on the expansion of the established categories, the reform process must nevertheless take into account the need to increase the number of non-permanent members and that there should be no attenuation of the right to participate for countries that contribute substantially both to international peace and security and to worldwide socio-economic development. Moreover, reform must be based on consensus in the regional groups in order to guarantee fair and equitable geographical representation.

My delegation believes that the fact that the Working Group established by the Assembly to deal with this issue has not yet completed its consultations illustrates that there are many problems on which consensus is required. Nevertheless, we also believe that it is imperative for the Working Group to make progress in order to satisfy soon the aspirations of the international community to have a strengthened United Nations that is capable of responding in times of crisis to conflicts and disasters, whether caused by nature or man-made.

As President Carlos Roberto Flores Facussé of the Republic of Honduras said during the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, in 1999,

> "To summarize, with regard to the new world order, which we hope will prevail in this global forum, Honduras supports broader representation of the peoples and the nations of the world, and a more just and balanced representation in the discussions and decisions of the United Nations." (*A/54/PV.8, p. 4*)

I wish to conclude by expressing our support for the statement made by Egypt in its capacity as coordinator of the Non-Aligned Movement. I would like to add that in the Millennium Declaration heads of State decided to achieve wide-ranging reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. We have no choice but to move in that direction with resolve and determination.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): The United Nations and its Charter remain the keystone for world peace, prosperity and justice. The purposes and principles of the United Nations have proved to be universal and timeless. An honest effort to reform the United Nations should be one of the most important goals of its membership in the immediate future.

The strengthening of the United Nations should begin with an effective reform of the Security Council, the primary guardian of international peace and security. In its five and a half decades of existence, the Security Council has received a mixed bag of assessments and reviews on its performance. There is an undeniable consensus that the Council needs to be reformed. Change is inevitable in the Security Council. The Security Council should be made to reflect the changes, both in numbers and in diversity, of the membership of the United Nations over the last 55 years.

For the last seven years, we have invested tremendous efforts in the work of the Open-ended Working Group. The Working Group remains the sole deliberative body on Security Council reform. Unfortunately, however, while we recognize some progress on cluster II issues, discussions of cluster I issues are slow, if not completely stalled. There is a sense that delegations have dug in on their respective positions and have adopted a strategy of waiting one another out. That is one of the challenges facing the Working Group as it resumes its work next year.

All Members of the United Nations should strive to bridge the chasm that divides the Working Group. If compromise is truly not possible, we should be honest with one another, throw in the towel and close down the Working Group. But then we would lose a historic opportunity to reform the Security Council and would be stuck with a status quo that everyone says is anachronistic and unacceptable. My delegation calls upon everyone to work for a compromise. The time to work is now. Reform of the Security Council would serve the interests of the broad membership of the United Nations. Perpetuation of the status quo would only serve the interest of five. The logic for compromise seems to us to be a compelling one.

We also need to examine how the Working Group could achieve more concrete progress in its work. The Working Group should examine its own methods and frameworks to bring about changes and provide impetus for its work. The Philippines would support any effort to improve the Working Group's methodology.

The establishment of the Working Group seven years ago brought a sense of expectation and hope that the United Nations would be able to provide the global community with a responsive and credible Security Council to serve as the champion of world peace. Let us not forget that our constituents extend beyond the four walls of the Assembly Hall. After years of waiting, the international community has become frustrated and has started to doubt that the United Nations, through the Working Group, can deliver on its promise of reform in the Security Council. We hope that the United Nations will not dash the high expectations of the global community and will seek concrete accomplishments in the reform of the Security Council.

I would be remiss if I failed to restate my delegation's hopes and ideals with respect to the goals of the Working Group. The Philippines, along, we believe, with all delegations present here, believes that the Security Council should become truly representative of the aspirations, values and hopes of all countries of the world in order to remain credible in the eyes of all. In our view, that would mean three things: the expansion of its membership in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories; transparency in its working methods; and democracy in its decision-making process.

At this stage, when the United Nations has 189 members on its roster of sovereign Member States, everyone would agree that the present size and structure of the membership of the Security Council no longer represent the interests of the general United Nations membership — if they ever did in the five and a half decades of the Organization's life. Only five Members of the United Nations have permanent membership of the Council while the other 184 members have to take turns for the 10 non-permanent seats for two years at a time. We should therefore make every effort to find a compromise solution on the issue of the expansion and the size of the Council.

We are gratified that, after seven years of work by the Working Group, the Security Council has taken steps to become more transparent in its working methods. But those steps are still few and far between.

We need the Security Council to respond more decisively to calls for complete transparency in its work. The Working Group has arrived at a set of constructive recommendations aimed at making the Council more transparent. Unfortunately, agreement on those matters is being stalled by a lack of compromise on other issues.

The decision-making process in the Security Council should also be reformed to allow the expression of the sovereign equality of States. The international community, particularly the permanent five, should now deal with the question of the veto, or all the intended reforms of the Council will be rendered meaningless if not totally unattainable. In fact, as some delegations have pointed out, a compromise on the veto would be a watershed for the other questions of reform. We should take a cue from this and perhaps discover a formula for compromise by simultaneously meeting the concerns about the veto and about the need to achieve other meaningful reforms. We believe that pragmatic solutions to the issues are within our grasp if we only make a greater effort and exercise the necessary political will to achieve meaningful solutions to the challenges facing us.

We know that work on Security Council reform is not an event but a process. As shown by our experience, it will be not only tedious but also politically difficult. We urge everyone to remain steadfast in pursuit of the goal of transforming the Security Council into a more responsive instrument for creating a just, fair, peaceful, secure and prosperous world.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia and President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, for the most skilful and patient manner in which he guided our deliberations on issues relating to the reform of the Security Council.

The item entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other related matters" encompasses issues that are both complex and of direct relevance to the vital interests of all States Members of the United Nations.

With seven years behind us, this is an appropriate moment to remind ourselves once again of the reason we agreed to embark on an exercise to reform the Security Council. The United Nations was created in the aftermath of the Second World War to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Under the Charter, the Security Council was given primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council was so structured as to give rise to a new global oligarchy comprising five permanent members. The rest of the membership was given voice in the form of six non-permanent members on the basis of two-year terms. Since then, the only change that has taken place was enlargement of the Council by four non-permanent members back in the mid-1960s.

The closing years of the 1980s witnessed profound global changes resulting in a sharp increase in the membership of the United Nations, which now stands at 189. Those developments catalyzed the demand among the general membership for reform of the Council in order to make it more effective, democratic, representative, transparent and accountable. It is with that objective in mind that we will continue to engage constructively as we undertake collectively to reform the Security Council in all its aspects.

We firmly believe that the current global trends to promote democracy, participation, transparency and accountability around the world must also form the basis for the reform of the Security Council. We must act as we preach unto others.

We have all agreed that the principle of sovereign equality of all States must be the guiding spirit and cardinal principle as we seek to reform the Council. We have also agreed that reform should be comprehensive, encompassing enlargement, decision-making, including the question of the veto, and the Council's working methods. If we briefly pause and take stock of the present status of the eight-year-old discussion on issues relating to Security Council reform, it is clear that there are two main obstacles to reaching a general agreement.

On the question of enlargement, there is no dissenting voice on the need for an increase in the number of non-permanent members. Unfortunately, a decision in this regard is being held hostage by a small minority who seek to promote their narrow national ambitions. As a result, the vast majority of the membership continues to be denied its right to have

greater possibilities to participate in and contribute to the work of the Security Council.

Reference has been made to the Secretary-General's remarks that a small minority is holding back progress on the reform of the Council. Indeed, we agree with this assessment, for it is only the few pretenders to power that have blocked any movement forward unless and until their ambitions are met.

If we look at the candidatures chart for non-permanent seats on the Security Council for the coming years, we can see the immense interest that Member States have in participating in the work of the Council. From the Asian Group, candidatures have been announced for terms up to the year 2014-2015, with two candidatures for 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 terms. In the Western Europe and Others' Group, candidatures have been put forward up to the years 2011-2012. For the Eastern European Group, announcements have been made up to the term 2010-2011. Similarly, from the Group of Latin American and the Caribbean (GRULAC) region, candidatures have been announced for non-permanent seats up to the year 2006-2007. These figures conclusively prove the desire of the general membership to participate in the Security Council. By the addition of new permanent members, this legitimate aspiration of Member States will not be met. In fact, it can be mathematically proven that, with every additional permanent seat, we will correspondingly reduce the possibilities for the vast majority of the United Nations membership that comprises medium and small States to serve as non-permanent members on the Council. While the waiting line for non-permanent seats on the Council continues to grow within each of the regions, the few who self-servingly seek to further their national ambitions continue to frustrate any progress in this direction.

That was the mathematical explanation of the reform exercise. I now turn to its political aspects. The so-called pretenders have employed a variety of arguments to justify their national desire to acquire an exalted status on the Council and to join the present oligarchy, which is an anachronistic remnant of the Second World War. In contrast to the claim of the present permanent five members that they were the victors of the Second World War, we have heard the argument that, because some of the new aspirants have high rates of assessed contributions to the United Nations, they should be given the status of permanent members in the Council. In short, we are being asked to accept the notion of these pretenders and their small group of supporters that permanent membership is available to the highest bidder. Let us not forget that the reform of the Council is not an auction. That occurs elsewhere in Manhattan at Sotheby's or Christie's. If budgetary contributions were to determine the size of the role of United Nations Members, most developing countries, whose capacity to pay determines their budgetary assessment, would be left with no role in the United Nations. Perhaps they would qualify for access only to a few General Assembly committees.

Those aspirants who cannot base their claim on the size of their assessed contributions and yet wish to slide into the permanent category tend to argue their case on the basis of regional representation. Africa has made a collective choice, and we fully respect that. There is no such consensus in other regions. The aspirants from these regions cannot peg their claim for permanent status to regional representation. Their claim by definition is narrow and driven by ambition for power and status only. Here I am referring to the regions other than Africa.

Most interestingly, yesterday we heard a delegation that has presented its claim since the very inception of this debate on the basis of equitable geographical distribution and as a self-appointed spokesman of developing countries, modify its claim to privilege by discarding any pretension to regional representation. This is a clear admission that that country lacks the confidence and trust of the region to which it belongs. This is also an admission that it lacks the assurance of acquiring that trust even in the future.

Related to the issue of equitable regional representation is the point that has been raised a number of times over the years — namely, why should the European Union have two permanent seats in the Council? In fact, a proposal has been made that the European Union should have only one seat. This proposal stands to reason, as the European Union has a single foreign policy and currency and is increasingly moving towards a single defence policy.

We must also take into account that any aspirant to a permanent or a non-permanent seat must be in strict compliance with its obligations under the Charter as well as the resolutions of the United Nations. Compulsive violators of the purposes and principles of the Charter cannot expect to be rewarded by anointment as permanent members.

In past and present debates, we have heard figures bandied around unabashedly in an attempt to create a certain impression of how the general membership may or may not view the question of enlargement of the Security Council. Those doing so have attempted to gloss over the fundamental issues involved.

A clear description of what the aspirants are seeking has been assiduously avoided. Do they aspire to permanent membership with characteristics as presently contained in the Charter, including the veto? Or are we being asked to consider a new concept of second-class permanent membership, without the veto? We also have before us the proposal of regional permanent seats on a rotational basis, with the veto. That proposal has been put forward by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and also by the Arab League. In the years of discussions, we have not been able to clarify these fundamental questions. How, then, can the general membership be asked to support expansion in the permanent category, when we do not know what we are being asked to support?

Secondly, on the analogy of claims for a permanent seat by different regional groupings, one cannot rule out that others, such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference, may in future make similar claims for permanent membership. The point then arises: where do we stop?

Eight years of debate have clearly established that there is no agreement on any increase in the permanent category. Any agreement on this appears equally unlikely in the near future, and this jugglery of numbers will not work. It is therefore time that we embraced the position of the Non-Aligned Movement, namely, that expansion should take place in the non-permanent category for the time being. In doing so, we shall have met a major demand of the general membership.

The pretenders to permanent membership of the Security Council seem to consider themselves as somehow belonging to a higher caste compared with the vast majority of the membership of the United Nations. This view is self-deluding and contrary to the very basis on which the United Nations was founded as an Organization of sovereign and equal States.

The overwhelming sentiment of Member States is against the privilege of the veto. Here, too, progress has been blocked by a very small minority of States. The veto is the primary obstacle to a truly democratic Security Council. Whatever little justification may have existed for such a mechanism at the end of the Second World War is clearly no longer valid. The veto is not only obsolete; it is also contrary to contemporary trends. In the immediate term, we join the vast majority of Member States in seeking curtailment of the use of the veto to actions under Chapter VII only. In the longer term, we join the majority of Member States in seeking the eventual elimination of the veto, in conformity with the position of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In the area of working methods, or Cluster II issues, progress has been made in the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform. We are pleased to note that the Council itself has taken a number of positive steps in this direction. We also welcome the mechanism that the Council will be establishing pursuant to recommendations of the Brahimi report, which would permit for greater consultation and coordination between Council members and troop-contributing countries. However, more progress is needed to ensure increased accessibility and transparency of the Council.

The reform of the Security Council must be carried out in an open-ended and inclusive manner. The issues involved touch upon the fundamental interests of all Member States. Therefore, any discussions on these issues must be conducted in a framework that is open to all Member States. Of late, an attempt has been made to cast doubt on the efficacy of the Open-ended Working Group. The Open-ended Working Group remains the only appropriate forum to continue this exercise and process in a transparent manner, in keeping with the mandate given to it by the General Assembly.

We look forward to the resumption of our discussions when the Open-ended Working Group is convened next year. On behalf of the Pakistan delegation, I would like to assure you, Mr. President, of our active support and cooperation as you guide our deliberations on an issue that is crucial to all Member States. My delegation remains fully committed to the reform of the Security Council in its all aspects, in keeping with the call contained in the Millennium Declaration.

Needless to say, the comprehensive reform of the Security Council should be undertaken in a manner that

unites and does not divide the general membership. The general good of the general membership, and not the national aspirations or narrow motives of a minority of the membership, must remain the yardstick against which we should judge the reform of the Council.

The issues of size or enlargement and veto are closely interlinked; one cannot be divorced from the other. We must also realize that fortresses of privilege, power and prestige smack of a bygone era. We are not in 1945. There are no victors or vanquished now. There are no spoils for the asking or the taking. The very concept of permanent membership with special power and privilege is totally anachronistic. Any reform of the Council must strengthen the inclusive and participatory character of the Organization in keeping with the principle of the sovereign equality of States and must be aimed at reducing, not accentuating, the anomalies of the past. We must learn from history and not repeat it. There is no justification for the creation of new centres of privilege at the cost of the rest of the membership.

As to where the general sentiment lies on this issue, one has only to recall — and I think you, Mr. President, were also here at that time — the resounding spontaneous applause that the President of Venezuela received in this very Hall during the Millennium Summit when he called for the democratization of the Security Council and the elimination of the veto. That was not an expression of a minority and reality does not change by interpreting numbers to mean what the handful of pretenders choose them to mean for their narrow national interests.

Mr. Ahmad (Malaysia): The entire fraternity of the United Nations has recognized the need to strengthen this universal Organization to better serve the peoples of the world by making it more relevant to the times and more in tune with current realities. It is in this context that the reform of the Organization has become an agenda of crucial importance. One of the most pivotal aspects of this reform process is the modernization of one of the principal organs of the Organization, the Security Council. At the Millennium Summit, our leaders resolved

> "to intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects". (*resolution 55/2, para. 30*)

Our shared responsibility now is to translate this commitment into a reality.

The General Assembly and its Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform have substantially deliberated the agenda item before us for the past seven years. My delegation wishes to express its appreciation, Sir, to your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Foreign Minister of Namibia, as well as to the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassador John de Saram of Sri Lanka and Ambassador Hans Dahlgren of Sweden, for all their hard work during the last session.

When we embark on this reform exercise, we should remind ourselves that we are working towards a comprehensive reform and modernization of the Security Council. The objective is already common to all. We are searching for a generally acceptable formula for a more representative, more legitimate, more democratic, more efficient and effective, as well as a more transparent and accountable Security Council. The attainment of this objective is clearly long overdue. The current session of the General Assembly is therefore crucial to our continued efforts to build upon the progress that has been achieved over these past long years. Many important proposals have been made and thoroughly discussed, from a new composition to a new size for the Council, from the working procedures to the decision-making process, in particular the question of the veto. Clearly, what are lacking are not ideas and proposals, but the necessary political will to propel the reform process forward to its successful conclusion.

Malaysia believes that all Member States should continue the crucial work at this session with added commitment, as has been declared by our leaders. The most important task before us now is to work on the points of convergence and to bridge the remaining differences towards compromise solutions. This task is surely not insurmountable, given the political will and our common desire for a comprehensive modernization of the Council. It is the hope of my delegation that, when the Open-ended Working Group resumes its work under your able leadership, Mr. President, and that of your Vice-Chairmen, we will be in a better position to embark on concrete attempts to consolidate various positions in order to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution to this exercise.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait), Vice-President, took the Chair.

There is already a clear and unambiguous articulation of the common desire to enlarge the membership of the Security Council to make it commensurate with the dramatic increase in the United Nations membership. The size of the Council membership's expansion must be significant in order to reflect its position as a truly representative organ of this Organization. The expansion must take fully into account the legitimate interest of the developing countries, which constitute the largest majority in this Organization and which, in the context of the present structure of the Council, are unduly disadvantaged and grossly underrepresented.

My delegation continues to support an expansion of the Council in both categories of its membership, permanent and non-permanent. Any expansion in the permanent category should include industrialized and developing countries alike. If there is no agreement on expansion of the permanent membership, the Council should be enlarged for the time being in the non-permanent category.

Without the necessary reform, the Council will remain an anachronistic institution that reflects the outdated realities and power equations of the immediate post-Second-World-War period. The existence of the veto has rendered the Council an organ with undemocratic decision-making. It cannot be denied that much of the impasse and paralysis of the Council has to do with this aspect of the decision-making process. The veto was at the core of the inaction of the Council in the face of the Bosnia massacre, the Great Lakes region genocide, the Kosovo tragedy and the five decades of the Middle East conflict. The clear threat of the veto by one permanent member has so far prevented the Council from taking effective and responsible action to address the ongoing grave situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem.

Clearly, the issue of the veto will have to be addressed thoroughly by the membership of the Organization, in particular the permanent members themselves, as one of the important aspects of a comprehensive reform of the Council. We need to identify the acceptable measures to circumscribe, or at least to manage, the use of the veto if the Council is to function effectively and in a responsible manner, as required by the Charter. Malaysia hopes that some creative way of managing the veto, pending its eventual elimination, will be embraced by the permanent members in their enlightened self-interest and in the larger interest of the international community. After all, this is one aspect of the reform that already commands the requisite general agreement.

My delegation welcomes the positive developments in the working methods and procedures of the Council, in particular the increased transparency and accessibility to the wider membership. It goes without saying that improving transparency and accessibility in the work of the Council has significantly enhanced the credibility of that organ vis-à-vis the general membership of the United Nations. We all recognize that this aspect of the Council reform has achieved considerable and substantial progress. So many important proposals that have been discussed in the Open-ended Working Group over these years have finally come to enjoy consensus.

My delegation joins previous speakers in encouraging Mr. Holkeri, as the current Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group, to fully utilize the prestige and prerogatives of his office, as well as his considerable diplomatic skills and experience, to re-energize the reform process and to seek further progress in our work on this highly charged question. My delegation also urges members of the Bureau and the wider membership to rejuvenate the sense of great urgency and dynamism that once characterized the discussions of the Working Group. Pragmatism, creativity and, most important of all, flexibility are necessary if real progress is to be achieved. The challenge before us is to determine whether further examination of different aspects of the Council reform can and will expedite the process of putting together the final, acceptable and integrated package of reform that meets the requirement of general agreement.

Mr. Mochochoko (Lesotho): Over the last decade the world has witnessed an unprecedented process of democratization as countries have moved to be more inclusive and representative. To be sure, the United Nations has been at the forefront of all efforts aimed at building democratic institutions. Yet, this Organization that has spearheaded democratic institutions and values is itself perceived to be largely undemocratic. While there is general agreement on the need for systemic change of the Organization, consensus continues to elude us on the scope and contents of such reform.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the case of the Security Council, the most powerful organ of the United Nations and the organ charged with the maintenance of international peace and security.

Seven years after the beginning of the debate on the reform of the Council, and in spite of significant improvements in certain areas of its work, the Council continues to be seen as unrepresentative of the general membership of the United Nations, unaccountable for its activities and far less effective than it could otherwise be. It is thus no surprise that the large majority of the membership of the United Nations, comprised of the very populous but economically disadvantaged developing countries, continue to complain of the Council's double standards, marginalization, lack of transparency, bias and pursuit of regional, political, economic or other interests to the detriment of the larger collective interests. These complaints continue to cast doubts on the sincerity of the permanent members' efforts to reform the Council.

Today's debate once again offers an opportunity for us to take stock of our work in the difficult but necessary task of reforming the Council. This important evaluation should enable us to strategically outline our road map for the future work of the Open-ended Working Group. This should thus be a time for genuine reflection on how we intend to find workable solutions to seemingly intractable problems. Above all, it is time to rededicate ourselves to the spirit of dialogue, which is necessary for reaching the required compromises for building a more effective and representative Council. The democratization of the United Nations and, in particular, of the Security Council continues to be essential, not only for the credibility of international law, but also for the legitimacy of specific actions of the Council.

Our debate this year takes place against the backdrop of some positive developments that should be an inspiration for us to continue working hard on pending issues before the Working Group. These developments include the Secretary-General's report, "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century" (A/54/2000), as well as the unprecedented Millennium Summit. In his report, the Secretary-General urged us to spare no effort to make the United Nations a more effective instrument in the hands of the world's peoples.

The Secretary-General called upon us to reform the Council in a way that will both enable it to carry out its responsibilities more effectively and give it greater legitimacy in the eyes of all the world's peoples. In the same vein, the leaders of the Group of Eight major Powers, meeting in Okinawa in June 2000, reiterated the need to reform the United Nations and in this regard emphasized the indispensable need for Council reform. The heads of State and Government echoed this sentiment in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) when they resolved to intensify efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects.

We must now capitalize on the momentum created by these positive developments and work towards achieving the long overdue desired comprehensive reform of the Council.

There can be no doubt that today's composition of the Council, which is still based on the distribution of power and alignments in 1945, does not fully represent either the character or the needs of our globalized world. This has led to consensus on the need to improve the representation and legitimacy of the Council by increasing its membership. We continue, however, to hold different views regarding the required expansion. The challenge for us is to find a balance between the imperatives of true representation in the Council, while at the same time ensuring that the Council is not necessarily rendered unwieldy and ineffective. The solution to this complex problem lies in reconciling the inherent tensions between effectiveness and legitimacy in the Council.

In this regard, the majority view, which is also shared by this delegation, continues to be in favour of increasing regional representation in both categories for the under-represented peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution. The well-known African position on this issue is that Africa should be allocated no fewer than two seats in the permanent category, and we reiterate our support for this position.

There can also be no escape from the fact that the composition of today's Council has to reflect today's global economic realities. The reality is that today Japan and Germany, respectively the second and third largest financial contributors to the United Nations, are also major players in the global economy — hence the

emerging widespread consensus that expansion in the permanent category should include these two countries. The bid by these two countries for permanent seats, which Lesotho supports, can thus not be ignored.

This delegation is amongst those who continue to believe that, like the issues of working methods and periodic reviews, the issue of expansion is capable of resolution. What is required is the necessary political will and genuine commitment to make tangible progress on these issues. The need for a timely and urgent focused discussion of these issues can thus not be overemphasized.

The most taxing question before the Working Group is how to deal with the veto. For the majority of us, the present system, in terms of which the permanent members enjoy certain privileges, including in particular the veto, is unsatisfactory. The cold war era is a grim reminder of how the veto can paralyse the Council and lead to deadlocks in times of crisis. The indiscriminate use of the veto in furtherance of national interests and usually at the expense of the collective have thus necessitated calls for the abolition of the veto.

To this end, options on how to deal with this problem that cuts across the enlargement issue include: granting additional permanent seats but without the veto, elimination of the veto with replacement by a quasi-veto super-majority requirement in some decisions, restricting veto use to Chapter VII issues only, and so forth.

This plurality of options is indicative of the complexity of the problem. While we realize the complex nature of all the issues before the Open-ended Working Group, these difficulties should not adversely affect our determination to reach agreement. Over the years the Working Group has made steady progress on various issues, and we should build on these achievements to make even more progress. The constructive spirit of cooperation in previous discussions augurs well for our continued efforts to find solutions. It is thus our hope that future deliberations in the Working Group will succeed in concretizing our collective endeavours to enhance the legitimacy, authority and effectiveness of the Council and will make this organ more relevant to the contemporary realities of the post-cold war era. My delegation thus looks forward to our continuing dialogue in the Working Group next year.

In conclusion, we thank the President of the fifty-fourth session, Foreign Minister Theo-Ben Gurirab of Namibia, for his stewardship of the process during the last session. Our thanks and gratitude also go to the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassadors Dahlgren and de Saram for their guidance, patience and dedication. We assure them of our continued cooperation as they guide the Working Group to a successful conclusion of its work.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish at the outset to convey our appreciation and gratitude to the former Bureau of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council for its outstanding work over the past year and, in particular, to the Chairman of the Working Group and his two Vice-Chairmen for their leadership and patience during the discussions of the Working Group in the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

We are pleased that President Holkeri will guide our deliberations on this critically important issue in this session. We have full confidence in his diplomatic skill and in his commitment to steer our deliberations to a successful conclusion, which would further strengthen our Organization in general and the Security Council in particular.

Seven years have elapsed since the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council. The in-depth debates in the course of the last session of the Working Group, which ended last July, and more precisely the profound disagreement on the draft report to the General Assembly, have in fact proved that there remain significant differences on such substantive matters as the size and composition of the Security Council, and especially as regards increasing the permanent membership and the right of veto. In other words, the fundamental question as to how to advance from the Security Council we have now to an organ that is more representative and democratic, but no less efficient, has yet to be answered.

At the same time, during the last session the Working Group managed to make some considerable progress on issues relating to the Council's working methods. In our opinion more progress, especially in the modality of the holding of meetings and consultations with the directly interested and troop-

contributing countries, is required in order to ensure increased accessibility and transparency. We also witnessed some minor softening of some rigid positions on the size of a reformed Security Council. This proved that this mechanism is not yet exhausted and that the Working Group should be given a further opportunity.

Nevertheless, the impasse or lack of progress regarding the expansion of the permanent membership of the Council should be viewed as a direct product of the enormous importance of the issue and the diversity of views and interests, and not be perceived as a result of obstructionism and delay tactics.

Here it is worth reaffirming the fall-back position maintained by the Non-aligned Movement, namely that if agreement is not reached on the expansion of the permanent membership, then the expansion should be limited for the present to the non-permanent seats.

We believe that the interests of all States and regions should be seriously considered in this unprecedented and historic exercise, which is also crucially important for the future of the United Nations and international relations. Therefore, the process of reforming the Council should not be subject to any predetermined and superficial timetable. Any attempt to impose a premature, hasty decision would run the risk of doing harm to this very delicate process, which is so important to all the Member States of our Organization.

We believe that the Open-ended Working Group on reform of the Security Council, with the same format and rules of procedure, continues to be the appropriate forum in which to pursue efforts aimed at reform of the Council. Therefore this Group should be given an opportunity to complete the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly. We are of the view that — due to importance of reforming the Council while respecting the principle of the equality of all Member States — all efforts should be made to reach the broadest possible agreement among the Member States.

As to the objectives of the reform of the Council, we continue to believe that the objective of the reform process is, and must remain, to make the Council more representative, more democratic, more transparent and more accountable, thereby helping to strengthen its efficiency and to increase its authority and that of the United Nations as a whole. Therefore, the reform must take into account the dramatic changes that have taken place since the creation of the United Nations 55 years ago. These changes include the end of the colonial era, which led to the developing countries gaining influence and to the end of the cold war. We believe that the attainment of these objectives requires, among other things, that the membership of the Council be expanded to at least 26, so that the developing world can be better represented.

Moreover, the opinion of the vast majority of the Member States, who continue to express their dissatisfaction about the use of veto in the decision-making process of the Security Council — on the grounds that it is an undemocratic instrument — should be heeded. The general support for limiting and curtailing the use of the veto with a view to its eventual elimination needs to be explicitly reflected in the final outcome of the Working Group.

As emphasized by the heads of State and Government in the Millennium Declaration, all Member States should

> "intensify [their] efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects". (*A/RES/55/2, para. 30*)

These aspects include enlargement and decision-making and the related question of the veto, as well as working methods. We believe that any selective approach would be counter-productive and run the risk of dividing rather than uniting Member States.

Mr. Morales (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): All of those who have spoken before me emphasized the fact that we have spent seven years going to and fro in the hope of reforming the Security Council. Listening to our discussions one could get the impression that we all agree that we must undertake a profound transformation of this United Nations organ, but that differences remain on some fundamental points, such as the size and the system of representation of an enlarged Council; the reasons for granting privileges in perpetuity to new members; decision-making and the veto. We must face these issues head on and hold frank discussions, because these seem to be the obstacles that are preventing us from making progress towards definite conclusions.

The Republic of Panama, during the Millennium Summit and throughout this fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, has appealed to Member States to

move with greater speed towards agreements that will ensure that the Security Council is more democratic, more transparent and more congruent with the general interests and aspirations of the international community.

In order to reach such agreements we must agree that the composition of the Security Council must be more equitable and representative and that any increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent members of the Council must not exacerbate the malfunctions that we have criticized so extensively. It will not be easy to reach agreement on these matters, but the delegation of Panama feels that without agreement the serious problems that have been dragging on will not be resolved.

The delegation of Panama attaches considerable importance to the Open-ended Working Group's most recent report on the item under consideration, and welcomes its recommendation that the General Assembly should decide the modalities by which the Working Group can continue its work. We respectfully recommend that decisions on them be made. To specify those modalities, we must, among other things, adopt positions in keeping with today's realities, accept that the premises on which the Security Council was created, as a reflection of the power structure of 1945, have ceased to exist and recognize that, because they have the privilege of exercising the all-powerful veto, some of its members have avoided their responsibilities and ignored decisions when it has been in their national interest to do so.

In making our proposal, we are echoing Member States and public opinion makers who point to the atavistic veto as an obsession that does not belong in a globalized world, who express their growing concern at the use of this instrument and who agree with the Permanent Representative of Spain when he states that the veto is the mother of all United Nations powers.

When we consider the origins of the veto, we recall that the countries that defeated the Axis in the Second World War and that devised it came from two opposing ideological camps, and that in order to maintain peace, security and ideological bipolarity, none of the five dominant Powers of the time could permit the adoption of resolutions that it regarded as unacceptable. The result was peaceful coexistence among those five dominant Powers for the relevant period. But it no longer makes sense to continue applying this system after the collapse of the bipolar world order and the emergence of a new globalized world.

The legitimacy and effectiveness of the actions taken by the Security Council depends today, and will depend in the future, on whether its composition and actions fully reflect the political, economic and social realities of today's world. The partiality that at times leads even to paralysis, and the threat of the veto after the discussion of issues with serious international repercussions, no longer have a place in a body that must necessarily be consistent with the order of international coexistence to which we have all committed ourselves in the United Nations.

Therefore, the delegation of Panama hopes that we will continue the task of tackling this matter, beginning with those items that have broad support, and, step by step, continue moving towards reaching formal agreements.

Mr. Lara Castro (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to express my delegation's appreciation to Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab of Namibia, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, as well as to Ambassador John de Saram of Sri Lanka and Ambassador Hans Dahlgren of Sweden, for the excellent manner in which they conducted the work of the Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council this year.

The delegation of Paraguay has participated from the outset in the Group's work.

We believe that it is necessary to express once again what Paraguay has already stated on a number of occasions through statements by Presidents of the Republic and Foreign Ministers: that there is a need to democratize the Security Council.

Paraguay obviously agrees on the need for a system of representation that is different from the current structure, which dates from the post-war Security Council. It also shares the view that reform should offer a meaningful alternative to recover the Security Council's legitimacy and provide a real option to make viable international efforts to bring about a world, now troubled by inequality, conflicts and injustice, of international cooperation, development and peace.

Given that, the delegation of Paraguay will continue to support you, Mr. President, and the Working Group over which you preside in order to make progress in the reform of the Security Council. However, permit me to make some observations in this context.

First, at the Millennium Summit the heads of State and Government affirmed, and stated in the Millennium Declaration, the need to intensify efforts to achieve genuine reform. That is a clear mandate that we must pursue.

Secondly, as a democratic and representative option, reform will not be feasible without the political will to ensure, within the context of world changes, expanded geographical representation and control over those who decide global policy by using their veto power, with its hegemonic influence.

Thirdly, in all these years of intellectual work by the Open-ended Working Group, many important elements have been contributed to Cluster I and Cluster II of the Working Group. The debates on reform and the time given to shared efforts have shown the diversity of views and the complexity of the matter. Nevertheless, the members are aware that reform cannot be left behind in the accelerated pace of change in the international system. Therefore, the joint effort creates an understanding that offers differing priorities and views. But amid the complexity of international political forces perhaps what is important is to understand the challenges and opportunities offered by the current debate.

Reforming the Security Council to make it more democratic, representative and transparent could be considered an ambitious goal. Some countries' resistance to strengthening the process of dialogue and negotiation undoubtedly make compromises and collective efforts difficult. However, the efforts of delegations in the Working Group support the idea of a reform that would ensure a fairer and more equitable world order.

As the Working Group's report states, significant differences and divergent opinions remain on a number of points, including, inter alia, the category or categories of the new members of an enlarged Security Council, the size of an enlarged Council and the veto. In seven years the Open-ended Working Group has not been able to reach compromises on these issues. Nevertheless, my delegation greatly value the efforts that countries participating in the Working Group have made to provide us with enlightening information in this problematic area.

Paraguay's position is as follows. First, as was stated by our Minister for Foreign Affairs to the fifty-fifth General Assembly:

> "We are concerned about the delay in the adoption of a decision about the future composition of the Security Council, because we feel that its enlargement cannot be postponed. Its composition must become more equitable and representative and allow for a better political balance. This gradual process of democratization must begin with an increase in both categories of members, permanent and non-permanent, and it should also include both developed and developing countries. Special attention should be given to the fact that the developing countries are now under-represented in that very important body." (*A/55/PV.17*)

Advancing towards a pluralist and balanced representation will mean thinking fundamentally in terms of the global interests of humanity, before promoting national interests. We believe that the new permanent members must include at least the two industrialized countries that have become major contributors to this Organization and that have participated in the construction of a new world order.

As regards the developing countries, it is of even greater concern that at least two thirds of the 189 Member States are developing countries, and that they are entirely under-represented in the Council. The fundamental objective of the enlargement of the Council must be, therefore, to rectify this unacceptable under-representation of the developing countries.

With regard to the veto, Paraguay considers that the reform should include the gradual elimination of the veto right of the permanent members. And speaking of the veto privilege enjoyed by five members of the Security Council, Paraguay agrees with the thesis that it should be eliminated gradually, for objective reasons. Under the current circumstances with both reasonable and realistic views, we are being forced to accept the veto as an inherent privilege of the great Powers. Consequently, those who do not enjoy this privilege today must, at the very least, endeavour to include in the reform some restraints that will limit the arbitrary exercise of this privilege.

Realism requires us to at least acknowledge the need to limit the privilege of the veto, but we seem to be moving further and further away from eliminating the veto. Perhaps we should orient our work towards seeking a gradual mechanism, with the responsible use of the veto in those cases where it is justified under such a scheme.

Paraguay will continue to make every effort to contribute to the process of reforming the Security Council and strengthening the United Nations.

Mr. Castellón Duarte (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council, Ambassador Hans Dahlgren of Sweden and Ambassador John De Saram of Sri Lanka, for their efforts and devotion during the last session and for the important document that has been issued.

Among the significant decisions adopted by our heads of State and Government in the final Declaration of the Millennium Summit, one decision emphasized that we must

> "intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects". (*A/RES/55/2, para. 30*)

This, however, this is not an easy task. Ever since the Working Group was created, a large number of opinions have been discussed, some on several occasions; nonetheless, even after seven years of debate, we are not yet clear as to which reforms might be able to be adopted. Despite the time that has passed, no decision of substance has been adopted.

The Working Group created by General Assembly resolution 48/26 is the most appropriate forum for continuing discussions of this matter. Nevertheless, delegations need to show flexibility and the political will to make progress, so that we can achieve significant decisions and thus adapt the Security Council to current times, making it more efficient, giving its decisions greater legitimacy and allowing all States to feel that they are truly represented in this major organ of the United Nations.

In line with the positions we have expressed in the Working Group, we would like to state that we are in agreement with the following.

First, Nicaragua is in favour of an enlargement of the Security Council that takes into account the increase in the number of Member States since 1945, when our Organization was created.

Second, Nicaragua agrees that this enlargement must take place in both categories of members — permanent and non-permanent — giving due consideration to geographical distribution.

Third, Nicaragua agrees that the number of non-permanent members should only be increased if it is not possible to increase the number of permanent members.

Fourth, we support an increase of five new permanent members and five new non-permanent members. The latter should include one from each geographical region, while establishing the criterion that there must not be more than 25 member States in the Security Council.

Fifth, we support the candidacy of Japan and Germany for permanent membership of the Security Council, as well as representation in this category for the States of Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and Africa.

Sixth, we believe that the new permanent members must enjoy the same conditions as the current permanent members, including the right to the veto. The substantial difference between the permanent and the non-permanent members is, precisely, the right of veto. Denying veto rights to the new permanent members would mean creating a third category of State, which would create confusion and exacerbate the existing inequality among the Member States of the Organization.

Seventh, we believe it would be appropriate to carry out a study, within the Working Group, on limiting the scope of the application of the veto. Eighth, we also support measures to improve transparency in the work of the Security Council so that the States Members of the Organization will be better informed.

Our delegation hopes that the work of the Working Group will be successful. We therefore commit ourselves to working with the President of the General Assembly in order to attain the objective of Security Council reform.

Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania): My delegation regrets that after seven years, the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council has not been able to resolve with finality the issue of the reform of the Security Council. It is, however, encouraging to note that the Millennium Summit reaffirmed the need to complete the reform of the United Nations, including the Security Council, on an urgent basis. It is our hope that this rededication on the part of our leaders will add momentum to the search for consensus in this matter.

My delegation believes that both reform and expansion of the Security Council should take into consideration the global changes that have taken place since the inception of the Organization, taking into account the urgent need to reflect the concerns of developing countries. In the case of the Security Council, the objective of the reforms should be to bring about greater democratization by restoring balanced representation between the developed North and the developing South in both categories of membership. We see this as a process for conferring fairness and greater legitimacy on the Council in the eyes of all Member States and the international community as a whole.

Concerning the expansion of the Council, Africa needs special consideration, given that it is the continent with the largest number of Member States in the Organization. The under-representation of Africa in the Security Council cannot, therefore, be justified in the new millennium. Its disproportionate under-representation in the Security Council requires remedying on an urgent basis. The Organization of African Unity, through its summit, has pronounced itself succinctly on this matter.

Regarding the veto, our position is to call for the extension of the same rights and privileges to any new permanent members that join the Council. We consider both the issue of expansion and the issue of the veto as integral parts of a common package. We further suggest that, as a first step, the exercise of the veto in the expanded Council should be restricted only to issues considered critical for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Lack of action to resolve the issue of Security Council reform sends the wrong signal to the international community. The Millennium Assembly, coming on the heels of the Millennium Summit, cannot backpedal on an issue that was clearly stated by our leaders when they met here last September. Any continuing failure to fulfil the aspirations of the majority will only generate disillusionment and undermine the very ideals and institutions we seek to promote. One wonders whether there will be any incentive for the Working Group to proceed with the deliberations.

My delegation therefore wishes to express its hope that the Members of the United Nations will have the ability and strength to rise above narrow political considerations and forge a credible partnership for the reform of the Security Council. If further evidence of the resolve of the international community is needed, let us look at the Declaration of the South Summit, which met in Havana in April 2000, and the resolutions of the Organization of African Unity summit, which met in July 2000 in Lomé, Togo; they provide clear guidance on this matter. The time is right and the circumstances are propitious. I believe we can move forward.

Mr. Sěrkšnys (Lithuania): The Security Council and the General Assembly are the most important United Nations bodies. Over time, even though the importance of the Council has continued to increase, the Council membership as a proportion of the entire United Nations membership has been decreasing. At the time of its founding and in the decades following, the Council consisted of a quarter of the membership. Now, representing less than a twelfth of the United Nations membership, it is the smallest United Nations body.

Seven years ago, the General Assembly established the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council. Some progress has been made in recent years. The conference room papers that have been prepared on both clusters are of great importance. The Council's work is becoming increasingly transparent. For instance, the reintroduction of private meetings and the increased number of open debates are giving an opportunity to non-members to participate in the deliberations of the Security Council.

So far, however, the institutional reform of the Security Council has been too slow. It is regrettable that there are still more points of disagreement than

items on which agreement has been reached. Nevertheless, we believe that a common solution can be achieved, including with regard to the most difficult stumbling blocks to reform, such as the size of an enlarged Council and the use of the veto.

In this regard, I would like to underline the importance of the consensus agreement reached by the leaders of our countries during the Millennium Summit. They resolved

> "To intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects". (*resolution 55/2, Millennium Declaration, para. 30*)

Moreover, at the Millennium Summit a majority of countries raised their voice in support of the need to reform the Security Council. This sentiment was echoed by more than 150 speakers during the general debate of the Millennium Assembly. That adds strong political momentum to our efforts.

The momentum should not be lost if we are to finish our work. We cannot give up even when differences in the positions of Member States look insurmountable. Time goes by, and positions can be modified to enable a single solution to emerge. The only thing we need is a strong political will to agree.

I would also like to refer to my President, who, speaking about the deadlocked process of reforming the Security Council, emphasized the importance of the right leadership. The active involvement and the leading role of the President of the General Assembly will be essential for furthering the reform of the Security Council.

It is time to move from discussions to negotiations with a view to hammering out decisions within a reasonably short period. The time factor is crucially important. The prevailing feeling is that we have been circling around some issues without ever starting to embark upon bridging the gaps. I am not a proponent of artificial deadlines, but I am equally against indefinite brainstorming.

The fundamental principle of Lithuania's position is a search for compromises, which, we believe, are achievable in respect of all topics, even the most difficult. In short, Lithuania adheres to the following elements:

The Council should be enlarged in both categories while retaining the current ratio of 1:2. For the sake of compromise, support might be found for the expansion of one category — the non-permanent — provided that there is agreement that the other category will be enlarged soon thereafter.

Due to the considerable increase in the general membership, each regional group should be given a new non-permanent seat. In this regard, Lithuania would insist that the Group of Eastern European States, which doubled in size over the last decade, be given at least one additional non-permanent seat.

New permanent seats should be allocated for industrialized and developing countries which have proved to be key players in their regions and whose input for the maintenance of security and stability is indispensable. The permanent status, however, must be conditional on non-use or limited use of the veto, increased financial contributions, and other additional responsibilities.

Being undemocratic in principle and constituting the main obstacle to reform of the Council, the veto right should be curtailed and eventually abolished. This right should be applicable only to matters under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter and not to Charter amendments.

Although substantial progress has been made in this area, further and constant democratization and increase in the transparency of the Security Council's methods of work is essential. The successful implementation of the Brahimi report by the Council would also make a significant contribution to the openness of the Council's working methods.

A reformed and enlarged Security Council will not only be more fairly representative, but, as importantly, more effective. Properly balanced membership will lend greater legitimacy to its decisions and, hence, their enjoyment of greater authority and respect worldwide. We should seize the opportunity to find a core solution — a right balance between efficiency and representativity. They are equally important and should not be mutually exclusive.

Debates in the Open-ended Working Group have exposed an obvious crystallization of views among the overwhelming majority on most of those issues. Narrowing the differences and converging positions is

possible only through compromise and flexibility on the part of all. Where stakes are high, an ideal solution may not seem likely to descend upon us. Rather, painstaking compromises and a determination not to waste momentum may yield the results we are really after.

Programme of work

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait), Vice-President, in the Chair.

The Acting President: I should like to inform Members that the General Assembly will take up agenda item 42, "Special session of the General Assembly in 2001 for follow-up to the World Summit for Children" on Monday, 20 November, in the morning as the last item, to consider a revised draft resolution, which will be issued on Monday morning as document A/55/L.34/Rev.1.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

United Nations A/55/PV.67

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-fifth session

67th plenary meeting
Friday, 17 November 2000, 3.00 pm
New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 59 *(continued)*

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. Insanally (Guyana): Like my colleague the Ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda, who spoke earlier on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), I would like to thank the President of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group, and his two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors Dahlgren of Sweden and De Saram of Sri Lanka, for their leadership throughout the past year in our search for general agreement on the reform of the Security Council. As so many others have confessed, it is increasingly difficult after seven years of discussions in the Working Group to bring new perspectives and proposals to the debate on this item. Therefore, apart from endorsing the views of Ambassador Lewis, I will offer only a few additional comments on the process that we have been following and on the progress that we have made thus far.

We can all agree, I believe, following the discussions of the heads of State or Government during the Millennium Summit, that consensus exists at the highest level on the need to reform the Security Council. Many of us would be prepared to go further and say that it would be possible to agree on the basic shape of such reform. In fact, when CARICOM addressed the Open-ended Working Group in 1997 we expressed the view that it would have then been possible to produce a draft resolution capable of eliciting the support of more than two thirds of the Member States of the United Nations. We are led to this view by the recognition that there is now general agreement that the enlargement of the Security Council should cover both categories — the permanent and the non-permanent — and that both industrialized and developing countries should be included in an enlarged permanent category. Furthermore, we believe that the question of the total number of an enlarged Council can be resolved without too much difficulty now that some of the proponents of a very limited expansion have indicated their willingness to consider a somewhat higher number, making possible a balanced expansion in the two categories.

There remains, however, a major obstacle to reform, namely, the issue of the veto. The discussions that took place during the Millennium Summit again made clear the almost universal support that exists for limiting the application of the veto. Permanent members cannot remain inflexible on this issue for much longer. In the face of such overwhelming sentiments for its attenuation, they must move on the issue of the veto to demonstrate their good faith in the reform process. For unless and until we can manage to limit, and eventually abolish, the veto we will not have accomplished much by way of acceptable democratic change. A realistic first step could be for the permanent members to voluntarily limit the use of the veto only to

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Chapter VII issues, and, following a proposal which I recall was made by Germany some time ago, for them to explain the use of the veto. Such a gesture could go a long way to improving the credibility of the permanent members and, by extension, of the entire Council.

While a resolution of the major issues of the veto and expansion of the membership continues to elude us, we can note with some satisfaction that there has been some progress with respect to improving the working methods of the Council. The Working Group's intense scrutiny of the Council's operation has undoubtedly had a salutary effect on the way in which the Council now conducts its business. However, much more can still be done, as can be seen from the impressive number of proposals included in the annexes to the report. The General Assembly and the Working Group must therefore continue to make a conscious and deliberate effort to achieve these desiderata, since enlargement of the Council will not by itself fully address these core issues.

Moreover, to advance the progress of the Working Group in its next round of discussions it is not sufficient merely to take stock of our accomplishments and our failures. We must go further to analyse the reasons for the current impasse and attempt to remove those impediments. Those reasons are obviously many, but perhaps the single most important is the concern on the part of the majority of Member States that any ill-advised reform may compound rather than remedy the deficiencies of the present Security Council; in other words, that the proposed cure may make conditions worse.

In such circumstances, it would be helpful if certain confidence-building measures could be taken to alleviate this concern and thus provide a dynamic for forward movement. For one thing, the five permanent members and their prospective partners could make concrete commitments to provide adequate levels of financing for both peacekeeping and development. This may provide the necessary spark to ignite the interest of the many developing countries that are usually silent and that are yet to be persuaded of the priority of reform in relation to their other pressing needs. As we have said before, a review mechanism that allows the membership to revisit the arrangement after 10 or 15 years to see how it is working can serve to develop confidence among those who are still hesitant.

Finally, although the reform of the Security Council still appears distant, we must not despair of reaching agreement. Those of us who have been around long enough will recall that when we began the negotiations on the law of the sea we did not know if, or when, those negotiations would ever end. Yet today we have an equitable regime that regulates a major area of international cooperation. We must therefore have hope that the exercise in which we are currently engaged will bear fruit eventually. This analogy, I hasten to assure, is not an argument for filibustering and delay, but rather for the patience and persistence that come from the realization that while international negotiations, like the mills of God, may grind slowly, they also grind surely and will, in the end, yield a worthwhile result.

Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti): For some 21 years, the issue of the expansion of the Security Council in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories has been before us. And for the last seven years, that issue has been extensively and intensively examined by the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council. Further, 35 years have elapsed since the last Council expansion, during which time United Nations membership has grown by nearly 70 per cent, making it a matter of urgency that the Council be expanded to mitigate inequities in the balance of economic and political power and in terms of equitable geographical representation. The Council's selective prerogatives need real transformation if it is to remain effective, relevant and legitimate in this new post-cold-war era.

Considerable progress has been made, particularly on so-called cluster II issues, which focus on the working methods of the Council and the transparency of its work. There is, however, a discernible concern among most Members about remaining differences that must be bridged if we are to achieve meaningful progress on cluster I issues relating to the size of an expanded Council, equitable geographical representation, permanent membership including the privileges attached to it, and, of course, the ever-vexing problem of the veto.

While there is undoubtedly general consensus in favour of continuing the Working Group's deliberations, frustration and resignation can be seen in the statements of some delegations. That is perfectly

understandable, but it should not be the sole basis for suspending or halting the efforts of the Working Group, which have generated considerable momentum and have clearly demonstrated that the overwhelming majority of Member States desire both expansion and reform of the Council. We need to move forward, consolidating the gains achieved so far with care and creativity.

We firmly believe that additional measures need to be considered and instituted to strengthen the process. To a great extent, that must be so because a properly reconstituted Security Council reflecting the realities of today's interconnected world is essential for global development, peace and security. This is particularly vital for developing countries. At present, half the agenda items demanding the attention of the Council pertain to Africa, yet it appears all too often that such issues and events do not receive the necessary urgency and concern that are accorded to conflicts elsewhere. Clearly, Africa can represent and sustain its own interests better if it has representatives on the Council on a permanent basis.

It is an anomaly that Africa has not had the privilege — indeed, the right — to represent itself adequately and permanently in the Council to promote and defend its interests. This is an unacceptable scenario and it is one more reason why reform of the Council must move, and move fast. In many respects, much the same can be said for other developing regions of the world, whose presence in the Council would definitely be warranted. While political and economic power, population and perceived regional status are among the criteria that may serve as the basis for permanent membership, considerable divergence of views has emerged with regard to composition. In our view, this is an essential issue that is susceptible of differing sentimental interpretations and that needs to be approached with pragmatism and care.

Let us be quite clear: reform of the Council will require the cooperation of the current permanent members, whose attitude appears to be one of circling the wagons to hold off the rest of the world. Very little give and take in their positions regarding limitations or reductions in their privileges, however small, is discernible.

We all know that the make-or-break matter in Council reform appears to be the veto. Unless it is addressed fully in all its facets, it will be difficult to expect meaningful reform. Again, the general consensus is that the veto has outlived its usefulness; it is perceived as anachronistic and outmoded, as giving rise to undemocratic governance at the international level and as primarily safeguarding the interests of the few. That was underscored in a statement (S/1999/996) issued on 23 September 1999 by the foreign ministers of the permanent five, stating that any attempt to restrict or curtail their veto rights would not be conducive to the reform process.

One question arises, therefore: what would be the rights and privileges of new member States in any expanded Council? Djibouti supports abolishing the veto privilege, which it sees as distorting the actions and stature of the Council, particularly when its use is so often seen as an instrument for advancing national interests and not those of the world community at large. Expanding the Council without placing all members in either category on a level playing field would hardly resolve the problem of unequal representation, lost stature and diminished effectiveness. Djibouti would therefore support the position that the right of veto accompany all permanent memberships. New permanent members of the Council should have the same rights and privileges as existing members.

Should the effort to abolish the veto remain protracted, however, we believe the veto should be gradually restricted until it applies, as originally intended and conceived, only to actions and matters related to Chapter VII of the Charter. It would no longer apply to procedural decisions taken on issues set out in the annex to resolution 267 (III), adopted by the Assembly on 14 April 1949.

The Secretary-General, in his report "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century" (A/54/2000), on the subject of renewing the United Nations to make it a more effective instrument in the hands of the world's peoples, urged heads of State to reform the Security Council in a way that both enables it to carry out its responsibilities more effectively and gives it greater legitimacy in the eyes of the world's peoples.

The deliberations of the Working Group on reform of the Security Council are part of the overall effort to reform the United Nations. In that effort, wherever possible, the various bodies of the United Nations should seek to assist the process. The General

Assembly is clearly capable of expanding its role on Council reform, particularly on the question of the veto, and it should seek to do so. In fact, some of the ways open to it have already been suggested by a number of delegations. One procedure worth considering is that of a General Assembly review of any veto exercised in the Council. Where a majority of Member States voted to oppose such a veto, it would clearly indicate that its use did not represent the will of the majority. The General Assembly must also consider creating additional procedures, beyond a review of the Council's annual report, which would allow it to regularly assess the Council's work. The Assembly, after all, has the right and duty to be fully informed of Council activities, and, as has been noted by others, to make whatever recommendations it deems necessary.

Those measures, and others, would demonstrate the political will of the General Assembly with respect to Council reform, and would send a strong message regarding the Assembly's commitment to a strengthened United Nations system. Djibouti supports the decision to continue the deliberations of the Working Group into the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. The United Nations is under considerable pressure from many quarters, and it must be strengthened. Council reform will no doubt be an integral part of that reform process.

Mr. Stańczyk (Poland): Comprehensive reform of the Security Council is one of the most urgent and important tasks facing the United Nations. That truth, recognized several years ago, led to the start of work on the reform process within the Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council, and is now more apparent than ever. The United Nations cannot enter the new millennium with the confidence necessary to perform its increasingly complex and demanding tasks without a more efficient and representative Security Council.

The maintenance of international peace and security remains the core function of this Organization and is a necessary prerequisite to its success in other areas in which it is involved, such as improving the conditions of millions who still suffer from a lack of resources and opportunities for development.

The message that came out of the recent Millennium Summit is encouraging. It shows that there is support at the highest levels for moving the reform process forward. It also reinforces the mandate for pursuing a true and comprehensive reform that would enable the Organization to better respond to the ever increasing number of challenges that it is facing at the dawn of the new millennium. While the leaders of the world have spoken in favour of reform, it is our task to find practical ways of expressing the prevailing will.

Past discussions within the Working Group prove that this is no easy task. Although the key issues of expansion and decision-making still raise significant controversies, one should acknowledge that some progress has been maintained by the Working Group and that last year saw some advancement in the ongoing work. This has been largely due to the flexibility shown by key participants of the process, as well as to the excellent leadership of the Chairman of the Working Group, His Excellency Theo-Ben Gurirab of Namibia and both Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Hans Dahlgren of Sweden and Ambassador John de Saram of Sri Lanka.

After several years of intensive debate, it is hardly possible not to be repetitive in addressing the issue of Security Council reform. I would like, however, to avail myself of this occasion to reiterate the position of my country on some key elements of the reform.

In order to function effectively, the Security Council must be perceived as a body representing the whole membership of the Organization and as a body acting on behalf of all Member States, as provided for in the United Nations Charter. The significant changes that have taken place on the world political scene since the previous reform of the Council warrant, in our view, an increase both in the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. We support the concept of expanding the permanent category by five members, two from the industrialized States and three from the regions that are currently under-represented — that is, Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

The expansion in the second category of membership should take into account the more than two-fold increase in the number of States in the East European Group that has taken place over the last decade, as well as their important role in the maintenance of international peace and security, by assigning to this group of States an additional non-

permanent seat. A comprehensive expansion of the Security Council, taking into account the aspirations of the various regions, would enhance the legitimacy of the Security Council and thus its ability to effectively implement its own decisions.

The Security Council acts by way of decisions. Decision-making is therefore another issue, the solution of which is crucial to the success of the reform. As we decide on this aspect of the reform, we should bear in mind that one of its main purposes is to increase the efficiency of the Security Council, which includes, inter alia, its capability to take timely decisions, especially when it is dealing with situations under Chapter VII of the Charter and in cases of humanitarian disaster. At the same time, we should avoid a solution that would discriminate in this respect between new and old permanent members, as this would result in a de facto multiplication of categories of membership. Notwithstanding the difficulties, a solution will have to be found. Flexibility and creativity are key words in this respect.

The review process is also essential to successful reform. It will ensure better accountability of the members and at the same time constitute a guarantee of the ability of the Council to adapt to future needs. Agreement on this point should facilitate solutions in other aspects of the reform.

Deliberations on the working methods of the Security Council should likewise be continued, as this is also an essential element of the reform. We are encouraged to note that further progress has been made in this field, and we are looking forward to a growing convergence of opinions in the forthcoming year.

Mr. President, we are fully confident that under your leadership the Working Group will continue to make progress in its work on Security Council reform. We would therefore like to encourage you to seek innovative ways of narrowing the existing divisions, inter alia, by utilizing the mechanism of informal consultations so successfully employed by other bodies in this Organization. My country is ready to fully cooperate with you in this important and challenging task.

Mr. Naidu (Fiji): Fiji wishes to align itself with the statement delivered by His Excellency Mr. Peter Donigi of Papua New Guinea on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum members represented in New York.

For eight years, the reform of the Security Council has been under discussion. General consensus is emerging for the expansion of both the permanent and non-permanent membership, for improved geographical or other agreed category of representation and for greater transparency in the working methods of the Security Council. Today, we also sense urgency in seeing some tangible result of this prolonged debate.

My delegation appreciates that change is a complex phenomenon, and particularly so for an institution that has, for over half a century, enjoyed the privileges that we, collectively as Members of the United Nations, have bestowed on it and its Members in order to maintain international peace and security. It is harder still where such an institution may be perceived to have outlived some of its strengths or weaknesses largely due to the shifting landscape of international peace and security.

Previous speakers have noted that global peace and security is now the norm, as opposed to the "international" character of the original mandate. Global peace and security operate within the same matrix in which global trade, economy and development must necessarily evolve. Therefore, the mechanisms for responding to the interactive mix of these influences must, also and of necessity, evolve accordingly.

Fifty-five years ago, the Trusteeship Council emerged as a key organ of the United Nations system. By and large, it has delivered on most of its mandated tasks. Today, its only remnants are the Trusteeship Council Chamber and the fiftieth-year celebration of the dynamics and motions of decolonization and self-determination for the remaining colonies or territories.

The Security Council was equally borne with the concept of peaceful and harmonious coexistence between nations, as Member States both big and small, and to affirm their equality pursuant to the Charter. The Security Council was also borne at a time when peace was desperately longed for and lasted for a short time. Therefore, it was mandated to react to brewing conflict and much less to be a proactive organ with the mandate and appropriately structured to anticipate and pre-empt conflict. That is the ideal vision that Fiji holds out for a renewed and a restructured Security Council.

No longer are the super-Powers the main instigators, actors or victims of conflict. No longer are the former super-Powers the mediators of peace and

post-conflict resolution. The United Nations system has set up appropriate mechanisms that have increasingly taken over the bulk of these tasks.

In this regard, my delegation is already noting significant and innovative shifts in the Security Council and its agenda. I note in particular the open debate on women, peace and security held last month as an event that marked the changing vision of the Council, as was positively acclaimed by the statements made by its membership and by non-members that participated in that debate. Likewise, the Council's deliberations and resulting pronouncements on HIV/AIDS are similarly welcome events in the Security Council's 50-plus years of work.

Let not our deliberations in this Assembly on a culture of peace be in vain or cast aside as an exercise in rhetoric. My delegation is engaged in this range of discussions, including in this very one on the question of equitable representation on and expansion of the Security Council, in the sincere hope that our collective wisdom and efforts will begin to bear fruit. Whatever political or national interests may obstruct our vision today, my delegation feels that the time is right to restructure and reposition the Security Council. Expansion of and equitable representation in both its membership categories are now imperative.

In this age of dialogue, negotiation and peaceful compromise, the veto stands out clearly as an archaic tool that at best belongs to the nineteenth century. Mindful of the differing elements in the debate, Fiji envisions a modernized concept of the veto that is more humane and effectively responsive to the needs on the ground for global security and peace. In order to defuse any tendency for national or political interests' overtaking a critical global agenda, such a power should not be exercisable by a single member.

In terms of the process and delivery of the Security Council reforms, the Fiji delegation considers that the whole reform package must first be agreed upon. We can work on the nuts and bolts once the package agreement is secured. This means that the new members in both categories can be determined later and should not be misused or misconstrued at this stage to block the critical flow of our deliberations on the substance of the reforms itself.

Finally, my delegation renews its unwavering contribution to world peace through various peacekeeping missions. These peacekeeping efforts continue to strengthen our faith in and our resolve to forge ahead for global peace, even if they sometimes come at huge expense to my Government, both in financial terms and in human lives.

Today, the picture of world peace and security seems unnervingly irreversible. The picture could be brighter in the future if peacekeeping and the Security Council were both to be more proactive, preventative of conflicts and vigilant for durable peace. We may yet witness the redeployment of sizeable financial, human, skilled and other resources — presently committed to peacekeeping in the battlefields to prevent the demise or displacement of millions of people — to other global urgent needs and goals for a sustainable world.

Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Ghana). The General Assembly's decision to establish an Open-ended Working Group to consider all aspects of the issue of reform of the Security Council was informed by the recognition that, given the tremendous changes and challenges in international relations, a Council whose membership was truly representative of the overall membership of the United Nations would enjoy the full support of Member States, a sine qua non of the efficient discharge of its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, as stipulated in Article 24 of the Charter.

Since its inception, the Working Group has held numerous sessions to consider the issue. What is clear from the deliberations so far is that, while there is unanimity on the need for reform of the Council, there is none on the substantive issues.

It is of cardinal importance to emphasize that underlying the calls for reform is the recognition that the maintenance of peace and security is a collective responsibility which lies at the foundation of the United Nations. Thus, all Members of the Organization are called upon to share in the discharge of this burden through, inter alia, assessed contributions to the peacekeeping budget and the provision of troops for United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Such cooperation, however, should not be taken for granted by the Security Council. Indeed, given the new and growing challenges that the United Nations is likely to face in this century — issues of peace and security, development, poverty alleviation, good governance and the role of the private sector and civil society in international cooperation — it is becoming crystal clear that the United Nations, if it is to be

effective, will increasingly require the support and cooperation of all Member States, irrespective of size.

In such an environment, the Security Council cannot discharge its responsibilities or play an effective, efficient and meaningful role in this century if its composition is not truly reflective and representative of the general membership of the United Nations, which currently stands at 189.

Cognizant of these realities, the Secretary-General, in his millennium report entitled "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century", emphasized that no effort should be spared to make the United Nations a more effective instrument for pursuing the priorities of fighting poverty, ignorance, disease and insecurity. Rightly, the Secretary-General urged the reform of the Security Council in a way that would enable it to carry out its responsibilities more effectively and also give it greater legitimacy in global affairs.

Motivated by a desire to assist the United Nations to fully discharge its responsibilities, at the historic Millennium Summit our political leaders not only endorsed the Secretary-General's call, but also resolved to intensify their efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. The issue we face now is how to translate the commitment and political will expressed by our leaders into reality.

As we see it, the question of the reform of the Security Council has two main aspects: expansion of its membership and efficiency and improvement in its working methods and procedures. In this connection, we also share the view that any reform of the Security Council must take account of the principles of democracy, sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical representation.

We are convinced that the capacity of the Security Council to discharge its obligations under the Charter would be greatly enhanced through democratization of the Council. Equitable geographical representation in the Council, based on the principles enshrined in Article 23 of the Charter, will ensure that the voices of all the Members of and regions represented in the Organization are heard and acted upon in a fair and democratic manner and will bring it in line both with the purposes for which the Organization was established and with contemporary global political and economic realities.

My delegation wholly subscribes to the Non-Aligned Movement's position on all aspects of the question of an increase in the membership of the Security Council. The Movement has also called for an increase in the Council's membership by no less than 11, a number which, in our considered view, is fair and reasonable and would accommodate the legitimate claims of all regions of the world to be represented in an organ entrusted with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The expansion of both the permanent and non-permanent categories of the Council, as recommended by the Non-Aligned Movement, will also meet our objectives and address the needs of the vast majority of Member States.

The Non-Aligned Movement's position is complemented by the African position, as expressed by the Harare Declaration of June 1997. Subsequently, the Algiers Declaration of the 1999 Organization of African Unity summit also called for the recognition of Africa's legitimate claim in the democratization of the Council. Africa's claim to at least two permanent seats should be understood and adequately addressed since the African countries are the largest group in the Organization. These seats will be allotted to countries by a decision of the African States, based on a system of rotation established by the Organization of African Unity.

Apart from this, my delegation wishes to endorse the Non-Aligned Movement's position that a periodic review of the structure and functioning of the Security Council, including curtailment of the scope and application of the veto, is necessary in order to enable it to respond better and more effectively to the new challenges of international relations.

In this regard, we are also of the view that, pending agreement on the expansion of the membership, the Security Council should be encouraged to improve upon its working methods and procedures and its relations with States that are not members of the Council in order to make the Council more transparent and accountable.

The Security Council is master of its own procedures and, therefore, does not need any revision of the Charter to put in place a more clearly defined consultative mechanism. As has been echoed over and over again in this Hall, the Security Council should not

merely listen to Member States, but more importantly, factor their views into the taking of informed decisions.

Needless to say, it is only through a restructuring of the Council on these lines that perceptions of selectivity in dealing with issues of international peace and sustainable development can be avoided and the causes of conflicts, whenever and wherever they occur, can be dealt with in an effective and impartial manner. Proper consultations would not only confer more legitimacy on the Council but also facilitate the implementation of and compliance with its decisions.

To this end, we are in hearty concurrence with the timely observation, made by the Secretary-General in his speech to the General Assembly at the beginning of this session, that although consensus is desirable, it need not mean waiting for absolute unanimity on every issue among Member States.

This certainly applies to the deliberations on the reforms of the Security Council. After seven years of discussions, we need to expedite action on the reforms. We must not allow a few Member States to frustrate the will of the majority of the membership of the United Nations. Is it not ironic that the United Nations, the very Organization that is championing democracy worldwide, is itself unable to practise it? Unless the present outmoded status of the Council is reformed, the legitimate and moral authority of the United Nations in pursuing democracy in Member States will be greatly eroded.

The Ghana delegation therefore looks forward to the resumption of the work of the Open-ended Working Group in the hope that the international community will master the necessary political will to take concrete decisions to implement the much-needed reforms of the Security Council.

Mr. Kouliev (Azerbaijan) (*spoke in Russian*): The United Nations bears great responsibility for the fate of world, and we all place our hopes in it. Serious and rational reforms should increase the effectiveness of the Organization and, first and foremost, of the Security Council.

The majority of Member States, including my country, associate with the Security Council the fulfilment of their legitimate rights to live in peace and security, the safeguarding of their sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the ability to live in a world free of wars, conflicts, aggression, occupation and mass exoduses of refugees and displaced persons.

In this discussion, our delegation would like to mention some aspects of our country's position regarding the matter under consideration. It goes without saying that the reform of the Security Council should be carried out in conformity with the principles and provisions of the United Nations Charter.

We attach great importance to the equitable geographical distribution of non-permanent seats in the Security Council. In this connection, the question of the representation of States of the Eastern European Group in the Council is of utmost importance for us. As the Assembly is well aware, the membership of the Group has doubled recently. Should the Group continue to be allocated only one non-permanent seat, as is now the case, each country of the Group could be elected a non-permanent member of the Security Council only once every 38 years. Such a situation contradicts the legitimate rights of the States of the Eastern European Group and deprives them of broad participation in the work of the Security Council.

Equally, we maintain that the representation of the States of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean in the Security Council should be in conformity with modern political realities and adequately reflective of the increased significance of those regions.

As for the idea of expanding the permanent membership of the Security Council, while understanding the complexity of the matter, we believe that careful consideration should be given to the aspirations of States that express their ability and readiness to bear increased responsibility, including financial responsibility, in the maintenance of international peace and security. We consider that Germany and Japan are able to serve as permanent members of the Security Council.

Regarding the right of veto, which seems to be the core issue, we believe that a voluntary and partial limitation of the use of this right could be a solution.

As for the composition of the Council, apparently there will be no permanent solution. Therefore, my delegation favours a periodic review of the matter.

Our efforts and expectations related to Security Council reform are aimed at preserving its authority and strengthening and enhancing its effectiveness and

efficiency. All this — its authority, effectiveness and efficiency — also means that the Security Council's decisions must be respected, implemented and complied with by all. In this connection, we are extremely concerned that four Security Council resolutions — resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993) — dealing with the conflict in and around the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan have remained a dead letter.

We look forward to the resumption of deliberations in the Open-ended Working Group, with a view to advancing discussion on Security Council reform. We must pursue the goal advanced by our leaders at the Millennium Summit. Despite all the differences, we are destined to move forward, because there is no turning back.

Mr. Sigrah (Micronesia): Once again, we meet to consider equitable representation on the Security Council and an increase in its membership. The Council's mandate to preserve international peace and security makes it one of the most pivotal organs of the United Nations. While we are mindful that there must be no haste in the reform, in order to accommodate everybody's concerns, we feel that it is now timely to advance the process. The plain fact is that the openness of the most powerful nations to accept rational and realistic changes in the Security Council is a key indicator of the future of global multilateral relations in general and of this Organization in particular.

My delegation is well aware that the consideration of Security Council reform has to be carried out in depth if we want to make the Council more representative, transparent and democratic. The current outline of the Council has served us well over the years, but the world has changed and the Security Council should reflect it. Reform needs to bear in mind today's realities, and so an increase in both the permanent and non-permanent membership must be favourably considered, while the Council must remain in working order.

We realize that the reform is not easy to achieve, but we ask all delegations to work in a cooperative manner to succeed. In this respect, my delegation is open to whether new permanent members of the Council should be able to exercise the so-called veto power, while we think it most practical to maintain the status of the present permanent five, including their right of veto, to facilitate their agreement.

It would be unrealistic to ignore the inevitability of larger, more powerful nations most often taking the lead in the United Nations. In fact, they should do so as a matter of responsibility; they possess the resources and the capacity. However, leadership should not become domination, and it should not leave the developing world marginalized. Only if these factors are taken into account in Council reform will it lead to renewed confidence in the Charter.

Finally, my delegation is pleased to be a party to the statement made by Ambassador Peter Donigi of Papua New Guinea, on behalf of some of the Pacific Island Forum countries of the United Nations.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased to extend my thanks and appreciation to you, Mr. President, to your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, and to the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group, Ambassador de Saram and Ambassador Dahlgren, for their efforts and wisdom in attempting to reach a consensus on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

The statements before the Working Group have emphasized that we are repeating ourselves and that we have made no tangible progress in the essential and substantive matters under consideration by the Working Group. Despite this, we feel that the following points must be addressed.

First, efforts continue to be made by the Working Group, particularly since this is the eighth session since its inception in 1993. Yet, with the dawn of the new millennium, the leaders of the world, in the Millennium Declaration, have called for intensified efforts for comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects.

Second, the veto has been exercised more than 35 times vis-à-vis the Arab-Israeli conflict. The recent threat to use it vis-à-vis any draft resolution that might propose the creation of an international fact-finding committee to investigate Israeli violations of the Geneva Conventions, the killing of Palestinians in the occupied territories, the continued occupation of other States' territories and the serious implications of such occupation for international and regional peace and security, demands that the international community muster a sincere political and humanitarian will to fulfil the call of the Millennium Summit to intensify all

efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

Third, the developed countries are working very hard to market globalization so as to reap its economic benefits, forgetting that these fruits cannot be reaped if the hotbeds of tension expand and if those who are pushing globalization do not understand the imperative of redirecting it to focus on equity, justice and safeguarding international peace and security. This needs a true political will with regard to various issues, including the reform of the Security Council and the expansion of its membership.

Fourth, at the end of the cold-war era the Non-Aligned Movement was very keen to reform the United Nations and the Security Council. This matter was given high priority at all the Non-Aligned Movement conferences, because the States of the Non-Aligned Movement understood fully that they did not have any real influence in the Security Council, that their influence was not proportionate to the size of the Non-Aligned Movement membership, and that their legitimate interests were not fully expressed within the Council.

Given this situation, it is only natural that my delegation emphasizes once again its commitment to the position of the Non-Aligned Movement, as manifested at its many conferences, in particular at the Durban summit held in September 1998. This position was submitted by the Permanent Representative of Egypt, in his capacity as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement caucus in the Working Group. The position was stated in a letter introduced as annex X of the report of the Working Group to the fifty-third session of the General Assembly (A/53/47).

My delegation would also like to point out that in previous statements we have supported the Declaration of the Harare summit, issued on 4 June 1997, which concerned the position of the leaders of the Organization of African Unity on the reform and expansion of the Security Council.

Fifth, the Arab Group has contributed to the work and discussions of the Working Group. It has emphasized the importance of making the composition of the Security Council more democratic so as to reflect the increase in the number of United Nations Member States. The Arab Group affirmed the Non-Aligned Movement position that the membership of the Council should be expanded to at least 26. The Arab Group, of which my country is a member, has also affirmed that as part of the increase in the membership of the Council a permanent seat should be allocated to the Arab States.

The contribution of the Arab Group was embodied in the working paper submitted to the Working Group on 23 May 1997. The content of this letter was reconfirmed by another letter from the head of the Arab Group submitted on 27 January 1998.

Sixth, we must pose here the following question: can we increase the membership of the Security Council and reform it without taking into account the interests of the developing countries, which are represented above all by the Non-Aligned Movement? I cannot believe that these interests should not be taken into account, because the Security Council should be more representative, more democratic and more transparent. The concept of equal sovereignty among States must be fully respected in all aspects of the reform process of the Security Council. This only further underscores how imperative it is that we not ignore the need to implement the purposes and principles of the Charter, which in turn means that developing countries should be able to participate effectively as regards both the membership of the Council and its decision-making process. This is particularly the case since these States usually constitute the arena in which the Security Council resolutions are implemented. Thus, it is better that these countries participate in the adoption of such resolutions.

In addition, since 1965 the number of countries in the world has increased by one third. In 1965 there were 120 countries in the world, and now there are 189. This fact requires that the Security Council be expanded so as to become more representative of developing countries and more capable of fulfilling its responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Seventh, although we have observed a few improvements in the Council's working methods, these improvements are as yet insufficient. This matter still requires an in-depth discussion, and, because discussion is not enough, serious political will is also required during the upcoming discussions, so that real progress can be achieved in all aspects of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to it. We

would like to emphasize in this connection that an increase in transparency will be brought about only by improving the working methods of the Council.

Eighth, we are struck by a theme underlying the statements made by most members of the Working Group: a belief in the need to reduce and rationalize the use of the veto as a preliminary step towards abolishing it. This is particularly necessary since our world is entering a new millennium, and any Security Council resolution in this new millennium should represent the true will of the Member States.

In this connection we would like to emphasize the position of the Non-Aligned Movement vis-à-vis the use of the veto. This position has been set forth in the many papers that have been submitted to the Working Group by the Chairmen of the Non-Aligned Movement caucus.

In conclusion, we and the people of the world aspire to having our Working Group — in its eighth year and at the dawning of this new millennium — achieve the progress that our leaders expressed a desire for in the Millennium Declaration and to having the commitments made in that Declaration translated into reality. We look forward to the fulfilment of these commitments, to bringing democracy, transparency and accountability to the Security Council and to getting rid of the evils of the veto. Such an achievement would help the Council take up its responsibilities, in accordance with the Charter, to bring about international peace and security.

Mrs. Ataeva (Turkmenistan) (*spoke in Russian*): This question, which has been under consideration for several years, is extremely important for the entire international community. Our most important task in reforming the Security Council is to make it more democratic, representative and objective. In reforming the Security Council and reaching a balanced outcome on the right to the veto, Turkmenistan believes that the most important consideration is that we do not do any harm or give way to emotion, maintaining a fair-minded and well-thought-out approach to the resolution of this question, which bears on the future of the Organization. We believe that there have been failures and inconsistencies in the reform process, and we should not, therefore, be too hasty to effect a complete change.

We support the reform of the United Nations and favour strengthening and expanding its role in peacekeeping. We are against diluting its powers by apportioning them to separate entities, with individuals, groups or other organizations assuming the functions of the United Nations.

We fully agree on the need for comprehensive reform, including on the question of the increase in the membership, the decision-making process, the veto and the Council's working methods. Bearing in mind the importance of each of these elements, taken both separately and as a whole, we should not limit ourselves to hasty or partial solutions. We agree that reform of the United Nations should take place, but at the same time we do not believe that such reform should be revolutionary. The Security Council should become representative, but it should remain functional, focusing its efforts on conflict prevention rather than responding to situations with sanctions or other such measures, which, in the majority of cases, affect the civilian population rather than their intended target.

Security Council reform should not only bring transparency to the working methods of this important international instrument for the maintenance of peace and security, but also provide for balanced and broad representation. It should be pointed out that considerable progress has been achieved on cluster II issues, relating to improving the working methods of the Council and measures to improve its transparency. The other issue, which is of enormous significance, is the right to the veto. We fully support the need to limit or eliminate it.

Although progress has been made on one cluster, we believe that the question of the reform of the Security Council should be resolved as a whole, despite the appeal of a partial solution to this complex issue. The fact is that reform of the Council is necessary, and it is necessary right now. Unfortunately, our annual verbal exercises have not led to any resolution of the key issues of Council reform that would enable it to reflect the political realities of the day. In this connection, if we wish to see our efforts bear fruit, we must ensure that in undertaking such efforts we bear in mind the possibilities and the realities of the situation so that each United Nations Member State will be able to say that the Security Council acts on its behalf and represents its interests.

Mr. Alemán (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Just as each State's highest law is its Constitution, the Charter of the United Nations is the highest statute of

the organized international community. At the same time, it is a treaty that establishes the rights and duties of the parties to it. Like a Constitution, the Charter has a constitutional part that sets out the functions and composition of the organs that make up the United Nations, and a doctrinal part that details the legal norms and the purposes and principles of the world Organization.

The doctrinal part has remained unchanged. However, there have been just two changes to the constitutional part: an increase in the number of members of the Economic and Social Council from 27 to 54; and an increase in the number of non-permanent members of the Security Council from 6 to 10.

These are precedents that must be taken into account when determining whether it is possible and appropriate to expand the composition of the Security Council to take account of new realities in the post-cold-war world. Above all, we must bear in mind that the United Nations now has 189 Members, and this calls for wider participation in the organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security so that it can be more representative of the international community, especially the developing countries, as well as more democratic and transparent in its negotiations and decision-making.

It is from this perspective that Ecuador has participated in the Open-ended Working Group on reform of the Security Council in the important effort to reach a compromise on the question of the increase in the membership of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. However, despite the fact that seven years have been devoted to these negotiations, it appears that the time has now come to give some thought to the need for a new approach to our negotiations and to pay greater attention to proposals formulated by various groups, in particular the Non-Aligned Movement, so that if no agreement can be reached on the category of permanent members for the time being, there should be an increase in the number of non-permanent members. Such a solution would also allow progress to be made in other important areas under discussion in the Working Group, in particular those relating to the working methods of the Security Council, an area where important progress has been made and substantial improvements can still be made.

Attempts have been made to give the veto legal trappings. It has been argued that it represents the implicit application of the legal principle of a correlation between powers and obligations: if permanent members of the Security Council are given greater responsibility for maintaining peace, they are also entitled to greater rights when fulfilling this task. However, the truth is that legal arguments cannot be used to explain what was, in fact, a political concession by small and medium-sized States to enable the United Nations to be created.

The passage of time has demonstrated that the veto is an anachronism whose exercise is incompatible with the principle of the sovereign equality of States. Its indiscriminate use has jeopardized the actions of the Security Council, paralysing its work on many occasions, because individual interests have prevailed over the objectives of international peace and security. Consequently, in response to a widespread request, the veto right should be limited to a few cases, being restricted to those that come under Chapter VII of the Charter. Unless that is done it will be difficult to achieve comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

As the head of my delegation stated in the general debate, in fulfilling the objectives of peace and security, the Security Council has had primary responsibility for maintaining or re-establishing international peace. On the road to renewing the United Nations, Ecuador believes that priority should also be given to reform of the Security Council in its composition and working methods. Its mission entails adapting in order to correct imbalances in its current composition, to improve its decision-making mechanism and to give its proceedings greater transparency.

Finally, Ecuador, in conformity with what the Millennium Declaration established, reiterates that it remains open to negotiations on all those aspects within its natural forum, which should continue to be the Open-ended Working Group on reform of the Security Council. We hope that in tackling the task before us we will be able to achieve concrete progress during the next session under the skilful coordination of the Permanent Representatives of Sri Lanka and Sweden, whom we thank for their hard work.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): The General Assembly is discussing one of the most important items on its agenda — the question of

equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. The report before us represents the results of long sessions and deliberations conducted by the Open-ended Working Group during the previous session.

In this context, we would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to the commendable efforts by both the previous Chairman of the Group, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, and his two Vice-Chairmen, who conducted the debates with wisdom and vision.

The deliberations of the Working Group during the past seven years have shown the urgent need to reform the Security Council and to render its working methods and procedures more transparent. Indeed, all the working papers submitted by several Member States, organizations and regional groups to the Working Group underscore the need for reform of the Security Council to make it more effective, to enhance its role in the maintenance of international peace and security and to make it more capable of facing the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Despite Member States' unanimity on the principles of change and reform, and despite seven years of deliberations, the Working Group has not yet been able to reach agreement on the nature of the desired change and reform as regards increasing the Council's membership and the working methods and procedures that it should adopt in performing its tasks. Indeed, the Council itself has initiated some procedures and applied them.

Kuwait has on several occasions expressed its view, individually or collectively, through the groups to which it belongs, that such changes should be made. This debate on the issue of the Security Council is yet another timely occasion to reiterate our position, which is based on the following.

First, Kuwait supports an increase in the membership of the Security Council. However, in order to maintain the Council's efficiency in decision-making and its ability to deal with conflicts that may threaten international peace and security, that increase should not be too large.

Secondly, the increase should conform to the principle of equal sovereignty among States and the principle of equitable geographic representation, so that the new composition of the Council reflects the reality of the membership of the United Nations.

Thirdly, in the event that an agreement is reached on increasing the number of permanent seats in the Council, Kuwait believes that increase should be limited and that those new seats should be occupied by countries that, in their relations with the United Nations, have proved their ability and capacity to shoulder responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and to realize the purposes and principles of the Charter in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres. Moreover, those countries should be elected by the membership of the General Assembly following criteria and procedures to be agreed upon.

Fourthly, with regard to reforming the Security Council's procedures and working methods and to developing its relationship with other United Nations bodies, in particular with the General Assembly, Kuwait would support any constructive proposal that would make the work of the Council more transparent and would facilitate the flow of information to and from the Member States of the Organization. In that regard, we would like to emphasize the need to institutionalize the procedures adopted by the Council to improve its working methods, as well as those to be agreed upon in the Open-ended Working Group. Those procedures should be implemented without necessarily waiting for unanimity to be reached on other reform questions, such as those relating to its size, membership and decision-making process.

Fifthly, Kuwait supports retaining the mechanism for electing non-permanent members of the Council set out in paragraph 2 of Article 23 of the Charter, as that procedure provides a better chance for smaller States such as ours to become members of the Council and to contribute to its work.

Sixthly, with regard to the power of the veto, we are aware of the sensitive and difficult nature of this issue. We have noticed that the Working Group's deliberations on this matter have been characterized by a near unanimity on the need to impose certain restrictions on the use of this right. In this context, there have been several important proposals put forward that need to be considered. We hope that we will be able to arrive at a consensual formula that enjoys everyone's support and that makes it possible

for the Council to carry out its duties without hindrance.

In conclusion, it is our hope that the deliberations of the Working Group will lead to a convergence of views that results in an enhancement of the role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and Security and that enables it to confront the challenges of the next century. My delegation is prepared to contribute effectively to the Working Group's discussions in the coming year to realize these objectives.

Ms. Achouri (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): First of all, Mr. President, allow me to pay tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Chairman of the Working Group on Security Council reform, and to the two Vice-Chairmen, for their sustained efforts to advance our work on this issue during the last session.

Mr. Pamir (Turkey), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The crucial importance of Security Council reform has been reiterated every year since the Working Group was established to consider this matter in all its aspects seven years ago. That reform, which the overwhelming majority of Member States wholeheartedly call for, is a major step in reforming the United Nations so that it reflects the realities of today's world and is better able to meet new challenges and the expectations of our peoples. Of course, we duly appreciate the delicacy and complexity of this task; nevertheless, we feel that we should have a comprehensive reform of the Council as soon as possible and that we should intensify our efforts in that regard, as agreed in the Millennium Declaration. The political momentum that emerged in connection with this question at the Millennium Summit should be employed to reach our objective, namely, a Security Council that is more democratic, representative and transparent, and thus more effective in carrying out the responsibilities conferred upon it by the Charter.

Since this question has been on the agenda of the General Assembly, an impressive number of proposals have been made to deal with various aspects of Security Council reform. Those proposals are included as annexes to the report before us. In fact, those fertile and diverse proposals provide us with the elements for in-depth comprehensive reform of the Council. What remains to be done is to reach a final compromise that can meet with general agreement, that takes into account the interests of all States and that enshrines the ultimate objective of the process of reforming the Council, which I have described above.

Tunisia, which has participated actively in all the deliberations of the Working Group since it was established, stands firm on its position regarding this question, which it has repeated on several occasions. My country's position is the same as that of the Non-Aligned Movement. We believe that Security Council expansion on the basis of the principle of equitable geographic distribution continues to be a fundamental aspect of the reform of the Council and that this is an urgent need, in particular for developing countries. This aspect is all the more essential because one of the main factors that gave rise to the reform process was the striking imbalance in the Council's composition. That composition has put developing countries at a distinct disadvantage, despite the fact that those countries make up roughly two thirds of the membership of the Organization.

Moreover, my country still endorses Africa's position, which we believe is legitimate and justified in more than one way. Africa is calling for two permanent rotating seats with the same privileges enjoyed by permanent members, as well as two additional non-permanent seats. We believe that Africa's permanent representation on the Council has become essential. In addition to the fact that African countries make up roughly one fourth of the membership of the Organization, most of the problems being dealt with by the Council relate primarily to the African continent. We therefore believe that African representation in the Council, especially on a permanent basis, will strengthen the Council's capacity to better understand the specific nature of the challenges in African zones of conflict and tension and to respond to them more effectively and appropriately.

Let me recall also that my country is committed to supporting the candidatures of Germany and of Japan for permanent seats on the Security Council. We are convinced that we should agree on a final formula that would take account of the interests of all Member States.

In spite of the importance of expanding the Security Council, reform cannot be confined to that element alone. Reform should encompass other, no less important, elements such as the Council's decision-making procedures and working methods. Here, we

note that wide differences persist on the question of the veto. We feel, however, that the call by a majority of Member States for limiting the veto to Chapter VII action is a reasonable one. In our view, that would be the most faithful reflection of the spirit of the Charter.

Still, we are encouraged by the considerable progress in improving the working methods of the Council, which is bringing us closer to a solution that can enjoy broad support among Member States. The proposed improvements in this area reflect the legitimate wish — which my country shares — that the Security Council should function with greater transparency, which can only make it more effective, authoritative and credible.

I wish in conclusion to emphasize how important it is that we redouble our efforts to find a just and viable compromise acceptable to everyone and covering all aspects of Council reform. My delegation will continue to give its strong support to any proposals that genuinely promote the representativity, transparency, openness and democratization of the Council and that will strengthen its capacity to respond effectively to the realities of the modern world.

Mr. Sun (Cambodia): This year, again, we continue the debate on agenda item 59, entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". On behalf of the Cambodian delegation, I would like to extend my gratitude and appreciation to the President of the General Assembly, in his capacity as Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council, for taking up this subject for consideration at the current session of the General Assembly.

My appreciation goes also to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia, and to the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group, Ambassador Dahlgren of Sweden and Ambassador De Saram of Sri Lanka, for the remarkable and untiring efforts with which they have been conducting the affairs of the Working Group.

Cambodia considers questions relating to reform of the Security Council, a matter that remains at the forefront of the complex issue of United Nations reform, as a matter of high importance. We firmly believe that, without the enhancement of the Security Council's capacity, there cannot be any substantial reform of the United Nations system in general.

The process of democratizing the Council was initiated on the basis of the legitimate need of Member countries, which have grown in number from 51 to 189, to adapt the broader United Nations system to a rapidly changing world. Reform of the Security Council is indeed mandatory following the cold war. The end of the cold war prompted this bold undertaking to ensure ever more the Council's viability, credibility and efficiency in shouldering its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with its Charter.

For the past seven years we have noted with interest the process of work carried out in the framework of the Open-ended Working Group on this relevant issue. Conscious of the complexity of this challenging undertaking, we observe that without the true political will of all Member States, finding common ground in this exercise is in no way a simple task. Owing to the national interests and varying perceptions of different countries and regions, there still remain differences on a number of issues, especially in cluster I. But nonetheless we should commend the efforts of the Open-ended Working Group and the outcome of its last debate in terms of forging ahead with substantive ideas and proposals on various aspects of reform. The growing sense of urgency regarding the need for reform is clear. It appears that since the last debate a majority of the views that have emerged have reflected a consensus in support of several elements to be included in a reform package, with a general understanding that such a reform should be carried out through an expansion of Council membership and through improved working methods for the Council.

In that connection, our position on this issue, as we stressed last year, is as follows. First, with regard to the question of the expansion of the membership of the Security Council, Cambodia fully supports the proposal, as expressed by a vast majority, to increase the membership in both categories, permanent and non-permanent. It is our strong belief that the Security Council will not be meaningfully reformed without the enlargement of its membership with the addition of both industrialized and developing countries. Cambodia is committed to the principles of equitable geographical representation and the sovereign equality

of States with respect to the expansion of the Security Council. The Council's composition should respond to changes in international relations by taking into account contemporary political and economic realities.

We feel that adequate representation of the developing world is essential to meet the legitimate aspirations of countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. The existing imbalance in the composition of the Council, with the absence of certain countries which could potentially assume the global responsibility of permanent membership of the Security Council, should also be corrected. In that light, my delegation wishes to reiterate its full support for Japan, Germany and India as permanent members of the Security Council. Cambodia remains flexible with regard to the size of an enlarged Security Council. It should be increased to a total of up to 26 members, among which the developing countries should have their proper place.

Secondly, my delegation is of the view that that the question of the veto, which we consider to be an integral part of the reform package, is inherently linked to the enlargement of the Council itself. It has been recognized that, on certain occasions, the scope of application of the veto has posed a number of concerns of a legal nature to the permanent members of the Council in their decision-making process. Since it cannot be eliminated at this stage, the use of the veto, in our view, should be linked to the principle of checks and balances. It must be limited and rationalized to ensure that the majority is not prevented from taking a decision of vital importance reflecting the common interest of the entire community. The permanent members of the Security Council should act responsibly in accordance with the Charter. In that light, Cambodia aligns itself with the position of the Non-Aligned Movement with regard to the Council's decision-making process, where the use of veto should be applied, if necessary, only where action is deems to be needed under Chapter VII of the Charter.

Thirdly, with regard to issues in cluster II dealing with the working methods of the Security Council, we greatly appreciate the progress made, to some extent, by the Open-ended Working Group in formulating a provisional agreement to one of the initial and fundamental issues: that the Security Council should, as a general rule, meet in a public format open to all States Members of the United Nations. Such transparency and openness would help Member States effectively to state their candid opinions, along with suggestions for improvements in the Council's working methods that were provisionally agreed upon in the last report of the Working Group.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I assure you of my delegation's fullest support in encouraging the Working Group to continue its work speedily in order to produce more concrete and substantial results, mindful of the solemn proclamation made by our world leaders who voiced their resolve at the Millennium Summit to achieve, among other matters, a comprehensive reform of the Security Council. It is my firm belief that, with serious consideration of positions, based on political will, such an issue could be addressed constructively. We look forward to the progress of the Open-ended Working Group at the upcoming session.

Mr. Padilla Tonos (Dominican Republic) *(spoke in Spanish)*: This Organization is facing a great challenge in the twenty-first century. In order to meet that challenge, the United Nations must undergo a process of change and transformation, beginning with acceptance of the equality of all of its Member States and drawing no distinction between the powerful and the poor and disadvantaged in the very Organization that represents them.

The Secretary-General's report, which aims at defining the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century, is motivated by a clear mission of reform and democratization. This is so because we know that the principles that shaped the United Nations Charter have demonstrated their validity over time, and have shown their effectiveness many times; nevertheless, we must acknowledge that the structures of power that were built into the Charter when it was created in 1945 do not meet the demands for development of international relations that have emerged in the process of globalization. Today, more than in the past, this Organization must serve us by establishing a fair counterweight among all of the countries on the earth.

No small number of events have taken place since 1945; the organs of the old United Nations undeniably fulfilled very capably the tasks entrusted to them as a consequence of the Second World War. This was so up until yesterday, but today the United Nations organs no longer correspond to an international community that has increased in number and whose demands for democratic development have multiplied.

In this context, the reform of the Security Council cannot be postponed. The Dominican Republic feels that this reform must take place, taking into account the sovereign equality of States, equitable geographical representation and the different levels of development of our peoples.

We are convinced that an increase in the number of permanent members and non-permanent members, based on these criteria, will allow the United Nations to play its proper role as the true representative of international democracy. It is not acceptable for a reform of the Security Council to lead to discriminatory treatment by the developed countries to the detriment of the developing countries.

Moreover, as was decided by our Heads of State and Government in the Millennium Declaration, we must intensify efforts to comprehensively reform the Security Council in all its aspects. Reforming its comprehensively in all of its aspects means not only changing but also improving both the structure and the modus operandi of the functioning and the decisions of the Security Council. Reforming it comprehensively in all of its aspects means ensuring that the Security Council efficiently fulfils the primary responsibility conferred upon it by the Charter to maintain international peace and security, proceeding on the basis of the principles and purposes of the United Nations.

Cognizant of the responsibilities that this implies, the Dominican Republic aspires to holding a seat for the first time as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. As one of the founding States of this Organization, as a country with a pacifist tradition, a country which respects the norms of international law and the United Nations Charter, and firmly believing that the development of our peoples is founded on peace and security, the Dominican Republic wishes to participate in the Security Council.

However, the Dominican Republic would like to see reform of the Council in all of its aspects, so that we may feel that it is an honour to belong to an organ of the United Nations that is more democratic, more representative, more transparent, more legitimate and more responsible for the good of the international community.

Mr. Clodumar (Nauru): As this is my first intervention since the election of the new non-permanent members to the Security Council, I wish to take this opportunity, on behalf of my Government, to congratulate the Governments of Singapore, Ireland, Norway, Mauritius and Colombia on the election of their respective countries to serve on the Security Council for the period 2001-2002. It is my delegation's hope that the new Members will seize the opportunity to promote fresh and innovative ideas that would help to increase the interaction between the Council and the other 174 Members of the United Nations on important issues of peace and security in all their aspects.

Nauru associates itself fully with the statement that was delivered earlier today by the distinguished representative of Papua New Guinea, Ambassador Peter Donigi, on behalf of the Pacific Island Forum countries represented at the United Nations. In this regard, I would like to further reflect Nauru's position on certain aspects of the proposals that are before the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform.

Cognizant of the fact that Nauru is joining the debate seven years down the track, we are astonished, and at the same time dismayed, that more than 2,500 days have passed without the Working Group's having achieved unanimity on any one issue, although there exists a majority consensus on some of the issues. By its resolution 53/30 of 23 November 1998, the General Assembly agreed to adopt decisions on the question of reform with a two-thirds affirmative vote of the members of the General Assembly. In our view, this was a signal to the Open-ended Working Group on how it should be dealing with the many versions of reform proposals before it.

Mindful of this resolution, many Heads of State and Government at the Millennium Summit were very frank in expressing their disappointment at the slow progress being made so far. As some of the chairpersons of the round tables have said, it is their sincere hope that 1,000 years hence they will not have to repeat what they have said! Nauru also hopes not, but the tone of some of the interventions over the last two days suggest otherwise.

My delegation is mindful of the financial impact that is associated with the building and keeping of peace, including related activities. The budget for peacekeeping currently stands at around $2 billion, and we are all aware of the cash flow problems that have confronted, and continue to confront, the Secretariat simply because the biggest contributor has unilaterally

decided to set its own ceiling on its contribution. We believe, therefore, that there should be a link between permanent membership of the Security Council and the capacity of members to support the decisions made therein — in terms of both financial contributions and manpower.

Accordingly, Nauru joins those countries that are advocating for the expansion of both categories of membership, but believes that we should limit the permanent membership to the developed countries, depending on the final agreed new addition to the permanent seats. Nauru has not taken a position on the question of the veto power for the simple reason that it is still trying to digest seven years of debate on this complex point. However, this special privilege — if, in the final analysis, it is retained as is — should come at a price, and those who are, or will become, permanent members should not renege on their obligation to pay.

With regard to how we should move the process forward, Nauru supports the proposal being advocated by Japan in the Open-ended Working Group that a stepwise approach be taken in the settlement of the outstanding issues, starting with those issues for which there seems to be wide support, and then tackling the more contentious ones. It is Nauru's understanding that a majority consensus exists, even within the five permanent members, for the expansion of both categories of membership of the Council, but there exist several variations on how this is to be done.

Nauru believes that a convergence of views can be achieved within a short time-span if all our energy is focused on this aspect of the reform first. The other contentious issues, such as the question of veto power, can be taken up thereafter, again dealing with the less contentious issues first, and so on. I think that there is logic in this approach to the present impasses.

In concluding, I wish to recall the fact that our leaders were challenged by the Secretary-General to come here, to this house of the peoples of the United Nations, to make bold commitments that would reinvigorate and renew the United Nations so that it can fulfil the tasks that it faces in the new millennium. This they did by unanimously adopting the Millennium Declaration.

One of the challenges was to expedite the reform of the Security Council. The ball is now back in our court, and we must deliver. Accordingly, Nauru implores the facilitators of the Open-ended Working Group to utilize, as their mandate, among others, the directive of the heads of State or Government and resolution 53/30 to get the job done in the shortest time possible.

In this respect, I wish the Chairman and the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group every success in the difficult task ahead.

Mr. Botnaru (Moldova): First of all, let me thank the President for calling a debate on this agenda item. Allow me to pay tribute also to the constructive contribution made to the debate on Security Council reform by the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassador Hans Dahlgren of Sweden and Ambassador John de Saram of Sri Lanka.

The fact that so many delegations are taking part in this debate points clearly to the crucial importance of this issue for the future of the United Nations. It is also a clear indication of our collective resolve to achieve the envisioned reform of the Security Council in order to ensure its representative character and legitimacy in the twenty-first century.

Seven years have elapsed since the General Assembly decided to establish the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council. In recent years, Member States have extensively addressed all the major issues concerning the reform of the Security Council. Significant progress has been made on certain aspects, especially on those relating to the working methods of the Council. At the same time, in addressing questions of international peace and security, the Security Council today has to deal with new areas of activity, such as nation-building, the establishment of civil administrations, and so on.

However, despite its strenuous efforts, the Open-ended Working Group has not yet produced the expected results on the issues that should constitute the core of a reformed Security Council. Differences continue to exist among the United Nations membership on various aspects of the issue of the expansion and composition of the Council, as well as with respect to the question of the veto. The written reports, and their annexes, of the Working Group have for the past seven years reflected this fact.

My delegation — like many others, probably — approached the current session of the General

Assembly hoping for real progress in the discussions on Security Council reform. We would like to believe that we are closer now to seeing the outlines of a solution than we were at this time last year. This cautious optimism is the result of a number of encouraging developments that have occurred this year.

At the Millennium Summit, the heads of State or Government stressed the necessity

> "to intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects". (*A/RES/55/2, para. 30*)

It has been made abundantly clear that tangible results are expected from our deliberations; it is up to the Working Group to deliver those results. In the millennium report, the Secretary-General also urged Member States to tackle the task of Security Council reform without delay.

At the same time, the strong commitment of the five permanent members to reform of the Security Council has been reaffirmed, as was evidenced, inter alia, by the announcement of the United States to give positive consideration to an expanded Council of more than 20 or 21 members. We hope that these developments will be conducive to a new environment in which Member States will be able to initiate even more profound negotiations on major outstanding issues, with a view to arriving at a final conclusion.

I should like to take the opportunity provided by today's deliberations to reiterate some of the basic elements of the position of my country on key issues of Security Council reform.

As the Foreign Minister of Moldova stated in his address to the General Assembly some two months ago, the reform of the Security Council lies at the heart of the general reform of the United Nations. It should be guided by the principles of equitable geographical representation, democracy, effectiveness, efficiency and transparency. It is on this foundation that we can modernize the composition of the Security Council and bring it into line with the substantial increase in the general membership of the United Nations since 1965, when the Council was most recently reformed.

Moldova is in favour of a moderate enlargement of its composition and of a reasonable increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent members, which would correspond to the principle of equitable geographical distribution and ensure an adequate balance between the industrialized countries and those that are still developing. In terms of numbers, we consider that a total membership of about 24 or 25 members would ensure the right balance between permanent and non-permanent members.

With respect to the allocation of permanent seats, we have already stated, at the highest level, that due to their political and economic roles in today's world, Germany and Japan deserve to became permanent members of the renewed Security Council.

The Republic of Moldova is also ready to cast its vote for an enhanced representation of countries from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, including in the permanent membership of the Security Council. At the same time, we would like to reiterate our position that the expansion of the category of non-permanent membership must necessarily include an additional seat for the Eastern European Group of States, whose number has more than doubled during the last decade.

Like many other countries, the Republic of Moldova considers that a periodic review of the composition of the Council would also help to maintain its representative character in the future. Such a review should examine whether potential future changes in international relations should be reflected through further structural changes in the membership.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that what is really needed at this stage is political will on behalf of Member States to continue efforts to attain general agreement on the issues involved, starting with those for which there seems to be wide support. In our view, these include expansion of both categories of permanent and non-permanent membership, including developing and developed countries alike, in the expanded permanent membership; reforms in the decision-making process; and the need for a periodic review.

Mr. Mutaboba (Rwanda): The Charter of our Organization was signed on 26 June 1945 in San Francisco and came into force on 24 October 1945. A few amendments to the Charter have been made, such as to Articles 23, 27 and 61. These amendments were adopted by the General Assembly on 17 December 1963 and came into force on 31 August 1965. Since then, very little has changed to adapt the Charter of our Organization and its main bodies to our times.

The Rwanda delegation supports the position of the Organization of African Unity on this important question of representation of members within the Security Council and once again welcomes the relevant amendment to Article 23 that enlarged the membership of the Security Council from 11 to 15. We would welcome it further if the membership were to be enlarged again to reflect the realities of the moment and to be fair, if fairness still means anything of a value to dwell on.

The Charter itself, in Chapter XVIII, Article 108, may offer little room for fairness:

> "Amendments to the present Charter shall come into force for all Members of the United Nations when they have been adopted by a vote of two thirds of the members of the General Assembly and ratified in accordance with their respective constitutional processes by two thirds of the Members of the United Nations, including all the permanent members of the Security Council."

Reading this Article gives ground for thought. It is possible to get a vote of two thirds of the members of this General Assembly today. It is possible to get amendments ratified by two thirds of the membership of this world Organization tomorrow or next year. It is equally possible to get the five permanent members included in the vote, but is that realistically achievable? The doubt my delegation has on this last possibility of getting the five permanent members on board stems from facts rather than from speculation.

The veto system held by the permanent five is still in place and it may not be the source of all evils. After all the consultations that have been held directly or indirectly, formally or informally, all signs show that none of the five is ready to surrender its veto for a number of reasons, among which we can enumerate the need to keep it as a deterrent; the fear of the others' undeclared intentions and strategies; the vested interests and acquired privileges linked to their current status; the need to keep the status quo when negligible pressure is being exerted; and the lack of seriousness and commitment to change from the rest of the membership, which has also become divided on futile grounds, where greed and attempts to achieve supremacy over others are no longer hidden and are even called by name.

Other delegates have said it: change for its own sake is not change. If changes are meant to reflect the membership of the time, let the change take place, as it should, for that matter. If changes are meant to be just cosmetic, then let us not waste our time and keep the status quo. If changes are meant yet again to increase the powers of those already powerful, then the exercise becomes irrelevant. If, on the contrary, changes are meant to take into account the developing countries whose voices have been ignored for so long, then such changes have a meaning and should take place. Developing countries have been marginalized enough and for too long that Members with a heart should sit and think rationally and pragmatically about how to save the image and the future of this Organization. To achieve this, we need a global approach rather than partial and piecemeal solutions.

The General Assembly should remember that Africa, as a continent, is not represented, and yet the Council deals with African matters almost on a daily basis with only non-permanent members, which come and go and sometimes go without making an impact towards the changes we are discussing today simply because they have no power of decision, let alone the natural obvious bias of each member vis-à-vis others and certain issues or given areas. The biggest segment of the membership of this Organization, the Non-Aligned Movement, is not reflected in the Security Council membership. This not only creates unnecessary antagonisms, but also throws into question the very integrity and impartiality of our Organization.

Increasing the number of European, Asian or other members will not by itself solve the problems, simply because the fundamental issue is more than the increased membership — it is the functioning of the Council and the ways it does business. Instead of concentrating its efforts on the functions and powers assigned to it in Articles 24 through to 26, it has chosen the easy way of doing everything and bringing nothing to a happy conclusion. As the saying goes, he who grasps at too much loses all.

The time has come for the Council to be reformed so as to be truly representative. This is a question of ethics and simple logic. The Council must realize that most of its work is concentrated in Africa, Asia and Latin America, continents whose countries are not adequately consulted on their own problems or on their proposed solutions to such problems. This goes beyond the Security Council. It speaks to all United Nations

bodies and agencies. The Rwanda delegation believes that the clear mandates we all refer to and which the Brahimi report strongly emphasizes cannot be clearly set or realistic if the people primarily concerned do not have a say or input of any sort.

These continents and countries also have expertise in their own issues. They, too, are Members of this Organization and should be involved at all levels of policy-making and decision-taking. When this is borne in mind in whatever we do and say in various forums to save our Organization from monotony, blatant exclusion and the rigid positions of its Members on matters of interest, such as reforming the Council, then and then alone can we claim to be heading in the right direction.

Mr. Jacob (Israel): Today I would like to express the support of the State of Israel for reform of the Security Council. We share the vision, expressed by various representatives, of a Security Council that is more equitable in its representation and transparent in its work.

Since the founding of the United Nations in 1945, and even more so since the last expansion of the Security Council in 1965, the world has changed drastically. In the last 35 years, 72 new Member States have been admitted to the United Nations. The end of the cold war, the trend towards democracy, the sweeping tide of globalization and the rise of new economic powers — all these and more have combined to profoundly alter the shape of our world and the ways in which nations relate to one another. The Security Council must adapt itself so as to faithfully reflect these new geopolitical and economic realities. At the same time, the effectiveness of the Security Council must be maintained.

As an obvious step, membership should be increased to reflect the increased membership of the United Nations as a whole. This expansion should be conducted with a view towards ensuring that the Council continues to be representative of the larger will of the Organization, without undermining its capacity to fulfil its responsibilities under the Charter. This is accomplished, first and foremost, by making certain that the Council's membership draws proportionately from all regions of the globe and that membership is increased sufficiently to reflect the great diversity of cultures and opinions among the nations of the world.

Furthermore, the procedures of the Council should be improved in order to provide the membership of this Organization with better knowledge of the considerations behind the Council's deliberations, positions and decisions. Meetings should generally be conducted in an open format, and we should be able to expect that written documents and records are made readily available. This would ensure the availability of reliable information, clear up misunderstandings and reinforce confidence in the Council's decisions. Such mechanisms that would foster improved transparency will only improve the Council's ability to fulfil its obligations under the Charter.

Beyond this, there are a number of other ways in which working methods can be improved. Meetings and deliberations of the Council should be opened to non-members. Briefings should be conducted by the President of the Council on a regular basis, and draft resolutions and statements circulated during informal consultations should be made available to the general membership as early as possible.

All of this would serve to increase the Council's credibility and effectiveness, as well as to enhance the confidence of the international community in the Council in particular, and in the United Nations as a whole. The process of reform should be broadly conceived and deliberately considered, with changes implemented in concert with one another towards the common goal of increased efficiency and effectiveness. Throughout this process, care must be taken that any change reflect general agreement among Member States of the United Nations.

With regard to the principle of equitable representation, I would like at this point to take note of the fact that this past year marked Israel's admission as a full, though temporary, member of the Western European and Other States Group.

Inclusion in the Western European and Other States Group will help to rectify an anomaly that has affected no other Member State and is an important step, albeit a first step, towards Israel's full integration into the United Nations. This process is, however, still in its infancy. To fully realize the principle of sovereign equality, as laid down in Article 2 of the United Nations Charter, Israel's acceptance to a regional grouping must be extended to all United Nations headquarters around the world. Israel must also become eligible for the same candidatures as are

all United Nations members. Until that time, Israel's status within the United Nations Organization will remain unequal.

It should also be noted that while we appreciate inclusion in the Western European and Other States Group, we remain committed to achieving membership with our natural partners in the Asian Group. In lieu of this membership, however, our inclusion in the Western European and Other States Group will serve to increase our ability to participate as a full and equal Member State. The Secretary-General's efforts in this metamorphosis were, and will continue to be, crucial to its success.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal): My delegation attaches huge significance to the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. It is an issue of overarching importance for my country and for the global community.

For the last seven years, we have been collectively trying to grapple with the issue of Security Council reforms. Member States have stated and restated their respective national positions and mulled over the issue for hundreds of hours during this period. Yet, we are not even close to putting together a package of reforms that receives the consensus and inspires the confidence of the general membership.

The challenge before us is to maintain the momentum for Council reforms and not to let the process run out of steam. The reforms have been long outstanding, and we need to consistently pursue them with a renewed sense of urgency for at least five reasons:

First, the Security Council neither reflects the present day political and economic realities of the world nor is it representative of the tremendously increased United Nations membership since 1965. These factors must be reflected in the structure of the Council.

Secondly, some of the key elements of the United Nations Charter, which were presumed essential when the United Nations was established, have become totally irrelevant in the vastly changed present global political and economic context. We need to remove those anomalies in the Charter.

Thirdly, the credibility of and confidence in the Security Council are being increasingly called into question. The Council has lost touch with its constituency, owing partly to its failure to come to grips with several problems in its caseload and partly to its preference to work secretively in splendid isolation. We ought to reverse this trend.

Fourthly, small countries feel progressively left out of the decision-making process of the Security Council at a time when more contributions of troops and funds are expected from them. They should have the opportunity to participate in all aspects of the Council's work.

Fifthly, Member States are increasingly frustrated with the sterile debate over Council reforms. Lack of progress may eventually generate pervasive apathy among Member States. We have the imperative to arrive at a consensus before the issue is abandoned as a dead end.

The President returned to the Chair.

The President of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, Theo-Ben Gurirab, steered the work of the Open-ended Working Group with impeccable leadership and consummate diplomatic skill. My delegation pays sincere tribute to him for his commendable work. We also extend our appreciation to Ambassador Dahlgren and Ambassador De Saram for their dedication to the task of the Working Group.

Nepal is confident that, under your able and enlightened stewardship of the current session of the General Assembly, Mr. President, the Working Group will be able to move full steam ahead and find common ground on which to found a package of reforms for the Security Council.

My delegation holds the view that the past deliberations of the Working Group have not all been in vain, though a concrete set of agreed reforms is yet to come within our grasp. They have contributed to some progress on procedural issues. They have also helped Member States to understand better each other's interests and sensitivities, have manifested the scope and dimensions of the reforms and have crystallized the need for a delicately balanced outcome.

There is in fact already a substantial convergence of views on a host of fundamental elements and methods relating to the Council reforms among the vast majority of the membership. Progress is largely held back by the sharp edges we find at the fringes of the continuum of various national positions. We ought to

realize that stalling the Council reforms serves no purpose at all. We should therefore all rise above our parochial interests, accept the imperative of some compromises and become more accommodating so that a breakthrough becomes possible for the greater good of humanity.

Nepal profoundly believes that we ought to strive for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council. Both the expansion of the Council and improvement in its working methods must be the integral parts of the Council reforms, and need to be carried out with equal emphasis and tenacity.

We strongly feel that the reforms should be pursued with a great sense of urgency. However, we equally strongly feel that there is no quick fix or partial solution to such an important issue with such wide implications for the community of nations. A quick fix is sure to distort the reforms and create resentment among the membership, as well as to vitiate the Council's effectiveness and undermine its legitimacy.

As one of the first proponents of Security Council reforms, Nepal supports a limited enlargement of the membership in the permanent and non-permanent categories. Equitable geographical representation and an optimal balance between the developing and the developed countries should constitute the linchpins of such an expansion. At the same time, we should preserve the efficiency and agility of the Council, which are critical for promptly responding to emergencies.

Creating new categories of members would be a novel and interesting idea. However, it is likely to introduce more complexity and disharmony into the Council. My delegation is afraid it would also add a new group of privileged States and accentuate the discrimination that is already built into the structure of the Council.

Nepal welcomes the procedural reforms so far undertaken by the Council in response to the consistent demand from the wider membership. They bring some improvements. However, they fall regrettably short of what Member States would accept as a minimum.

The Council's largely academic open debates, for instance, cannot be a substitute for the problem-specific, pre-decision informal consultations, in which States non-members of the Council at present have virtually no role to play, although those States have to put their personnel in harm's way and contribute funds to implement the Council's decisions.

Transparency and accountability, which we all tout as virtues underpinning the democratic society, would be the sources of confidence and strength for the democratic organ we would all like the Security Council to be. They will only enhance the Council's legitimacy and effectiveness, which will benefit the entire world community.

The veto power remains the principal obstacle to evolving a consensus for Security Council reforms. It is completely anachronistic and undemocratic; and it is also in sharp contrast to the ideals of the United Nations, which is founded on the principle of sovereign equality. It reflects the world-view cast in the mould of a bygone era, when the Second World War was just over and colonialism was still alive. It is also incongruous with the democratic values countries have increasingly embraced today.

Ideally, total elimination of the veto power will strengthen the United Nations and inspire countries to practise greater democracy. Until removed, the veto power must be curtailed, limiting its use to Chapter VII action only. The reform process is likely to drag on indefinitely, and the legitimacy of the Council will continue to erode if we fail to agree to do away with this key impediment.

In a world that is constantly in flux, it makes abundant sense to institute a periodic review mechanism to examine all aspects of the enlarged Security Council and adapt it to the emergent challenges. Such a review, however, must be non-discriminatory.

As a small country, Nepal looks up to the United Nations as a bulwark of world peace and of its own security. Our stake in an effective, representative and democratic Security Council is very high. We are therefore committed to continuing to work with other Member States to realize this goal.

At the Millennium Summit our heads of State or Government have instructed us "To intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects." (*resolution 55/2, Millennium Declaration, para. 30*) It offers the Open-ended Working Group and Member States the vision, inspiration and mandate to follow in order to proceed with our work expeditiously. And you, Mr. President,

can count on my delegation's full support in that endeavour.

Mr. Sotirov (Bulgaria): At the outset, Mr. President, allow me to thank your predecessor, Foreign Minister Theo-Ben Gurirab, and the Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group, Ambassador Dahlgren and Ambassador De Saram, for their tireless efforts over the past year to bring about steady progress on the question of the Security Council reform. The Bulgarian delegation has always attached great importance to this issue and welcomes your willingness, Sir, to devote due attention to it during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. In addition, I would like to commend your efforts to conduct the work on this outstanding question in an active, open, transparent and neutral way. We are strongly convinced that the impetus given by the Millennium Summit to the reform of the Security Council should be used to help streamline and strengthen the Organization and make it more efficient and responsive to the new realities.

Bulgaria has repeatedly expressed its views on the various aspects of the reform in the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group. Regarding the enlargement of the Security Council, Bulgaria shares the view that it should encompass both categories of membership, permanent and non-permanent, this being a more adequate way of reflecting the sweeping changes in the world since the end of the Second World War. The addition of five additional permanent seats and a similar number of non-permanent seats, bringing the total number of Security Council members to the mid-twenties, would restore balance and add more credibility and legitimacy to Security Council decisions. It is Bulgaria's firm conviction that equitable geographical distribution is a solid basis and criterion for Security Council enlargement. At the same time, it is of utmost importance to maintain the authority and enhance the effectiveness of this principal United Nations body. Therefore, we would favour an expansion that took into account both the increased United Nations membership and the increased role and political and economic potential of certain States, such as Germany and Japan, that could assume the responsibilities of permanent members.

Since the membership of the Eastern European regional group has doubled during the last decade, Bulgaria considers that one of the additional non-permanent seats should be allocated to this group, bringing to two the total number of non-permanent seats belonging to our region in an expanded Council.

With regard to the veto powers of the permanent members, we believe that under the present conditions, it is essential that the use of these powers be curtailed in order for the Security Council's work in facing the new challenges of the twenty-first century to be effective. Bulgaria shares the view that this curtailment can be achieved without introducing amendments to the Charter. Permanent members of the Security Council, mindful of the fact that they are acting on behalf of the Organization as a whole, should limit the exercise their veto right. A number of exclusion clauses for the application of the veto may be agreed upon and applied. It is encouraging in this respect that during the debates in the Working Group, the aspirant countries have joined their voices to the appeals for a more restricted use of the veto.

As far as the Security Council's working methods are concerned, my delegation is pleased to note that significant progress has been made in advancing transparency and adopting innovative formats.

In conclusion, we are convinced that it is high time for all of us, after the seven-year debate in the Working Group, to finally bridge the existing gap, which is preventing us from making tangible progress. Our delegation will further contribute to the common efforts, and, together with the other like-minded countries of the Group of 10, we are ready to support any initiative aimed at a pragmatic compromise.

Bulgaria has no doubt that you, Mr. President, will exercise the necessary wisdom and skills in the effective guidance of the Security Council reform process. In this respect, broad consultations with the membership would be instrumental for ensuring the widest possible consensus. Needless to say, you can count on our support in facing this challenge.

Mr. Maquieira (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, Mr. President, I would like to thank your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab of Namibia, and the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group, Ambassador John de Saram of Sri Lanka and Ambassador Hans Dahlgren of Sweden, who have attempted to achieve real advances on this issue.

The Chilean delegation comes to this debate with concern and frustration about the scant progress on the issue of the reform of the Security Council. The

General Assembly began the process of reconsidering the composition of the Council and its working methods back in 1992. We knew that, due to the very nature of the issue and the diversity of both views and interests, it would be a long, complicated exercise. However, we approached these difficult negotiations with optimism because of the general belief in the need to reform the Security Council so that it could respond effectively to the new responsibilities of the Organization deriving from the transformations in the international community. Over the last eight years, though, a strange and wearying process has taken place. We have turned to the General Assembly to underscore the urgency of reforming the Security Council, and in the Open-ended Working Group we have not been able to advance in the substantive negotiations.

Today we have been convened once again to present our points of view on this issue, but our mood is different. On the one hand, we have the hope that what has been said by the more than 150 heads of State or Government who participated recently in the Millennium Summit will provide new impetus to the process. On the other hand, we fear that this appeal by the heads of State or Government will not be sufficient to cause a positive turn in the situation.

This is the issue of greatest concern to the Chilean delegation at the present stage of this exercise.

Regarding the substantial issues, we have said repeatedly that Chile agrees with the need for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council that covers its composition, its working methods and the problem of the veto.

As regards the composition, my country supports enlarging the Council in both categories in a way that adequately reflects the new international realities. As regards the Council's working methods, Chile recognizes the advances that have been achieved in this area over the last few years, particularly in respect of introducing greater levels of transparency in the deliberations of this body. At the same time, we believe that participation and transparency in the deliberations of the Security Council are rights and duties that should be spelled out in rules and not depend on the goodwill of the members of the Council.

As regards the veto, as is well known, since the San Francisco Conference we have maintained that it is a mechanism that undermines the democratic nature of the Organization. Consequently, we believe that the use of the veto should at first be limited to situations covered under Chapter VII of the Charter and subsequently should be eliminated. This reform should be carried out in a participatory manner by the General Assembly in accordance with the provisions of resolution 53/30.

Clearly, the impasse we are facing in this exercise should lead us to reflect on the future of the exercise. As we have said, the dichotomy between the expressed desires and the results obtained to date is a problem that affects the image and the capacity for action of the United Nations.

If one fact has become clear over the past eight years — at least for the delegation of Chile — it is that the mere repetition of our positions will not lead to the results for which we are hoping. That is why we believe that the time has perhaps come for the Open-ended Working Group to deal specifically with the problem of paralysis in our negotiations. In this context, we should explore other formulas that might enable us to progress towards the agreement that we all wish to see but which continues to elude us. It is as if, at the end of a long road, we have come to a locked door and our keys do not fit the lock. It may be time to forge new keys.

Mr. Spirollari (Albania): Today's debate is focused on an issue that is very important for all Member States and for the future of the United Nations itself: the reform of the Security Council. The number of speakers in this debate testifies to the interest of Member States in the reform of the Security Council and to the importance that they attach to the issue. We would like to commend the Chairman and the Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group for their professional guidance and important contribution to the reform of the Security Council during deliberations in the Working Group.

We believe that interesting proposals and important ideas have been put forward by various Members States, and we are happy to see that some progress has been achieved on the democratization of the working methods of the Security Council. Furthermore, the Millennium Summit adopted an important Declaration in which the Member States embraced the idea that the reform of the Security Council should be comprehensive and cover all aspects. Albania shares the view that the expansion of

the Security Council should be meaningful and comprehensive and increase the legitimacy and transparency of that principal body of the United Nations, reflecting the new realities in the world and making the Security Council more accessible to the Member States and more able to respond to the complex challenges to international peace and security.

Regarding the key issues of Security Council reform, Albania has made clear its position during previous General Assembly sessions. In this context, we would like to add that, taking into account the increased membership of the Eastern European Group, we believe that an additional non-permanent seat should be given to that group, of which Albania is a member.

We think that every Member State has an important role to play and a right to be heard during this exercise. It is therefore essential that discussion of Security Council reform continue in the Working Group with a view to finding the necessary political will and achieving a comprehensive and long-term solution that enjoys the support of the membership of the United Nations.

Mr. Andino Salazar (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Reform initiatives to make the United Nations more effective, transparent and representative have been an almost permanent fixture on the agenda of our Organization since the earliest years. There have been some limited results, particularly in areas that do not run counter to the national, political or strategic interests of Member States, especially the permanent members of the Security Council. But we must acknowledge that efforts to revitalize and modernize the Organization in substantive areas of special interest to the States, such as the reform of principal bodies, have been marginalized.

The beginning of a new era in international relations in the past decade — an era free from confrontation that began with a trend towards strengthening cooperation among the great Powers in the area of peace and security — generated new hopes and gave rise to initiatives aimed at introducing changes that were considered to be indispensable not only for overcoming the structural shortcomings that have characterized the world Organization throughout its existence, but for re-establishing its multilateralist credibility, in particular, the collective security system, whose effectiveness and legitimacy will, we believe, always be determined by the level of support provided by the Member States.

We have no doubt that the new conditions and the new spirit generated the idea among the Member States that, for the first time, conditions were beginning to exist that would enable the composition of the Security Council and related matters to be re-examined so as to adapt it to the new realities and changes in international relations. These hopes soon faded in the face of the reality of diverse and opposing interests among the members of the international community.

Indeed, since the beginning of the work of the Open-ended Working Group on all aspects of the increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters, established in accordance with resolution 48/26 of 3 December 1993, no significant progress has been achieved.

After seven years, with the exception of the decision contained in resolution 53/30 of 23 November 1998, which determined that the adoption of any decision or resolution on the reform of the Security Council and related matters must be adopted with the affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the members of the General Assembly, and the limited progress made on greater openness and transparency in the operation of the Council, the results in substantive and fundamental areas such as the categories and number of new members, as well as in the decision-making process, including the question of the veto, are not encouraging, because of the lack of political will on the part of the main players.

At summit meetings, world leaders have reaffirmed the applicability of the purposes and principles of the world Organization, as well as its irreplaceable importance and value in international relations. Moral, material and political commitments have been made to providing the means, financial resources and adequate mechanisms so that global challenges can be dealt with efficiently. But these have not materialized. On the contrary, what we have seen is a gradual movement towards a crisis in multilateralism.

This situation has been cause for great concern among many Member States, including my country. During the general debate in this Assembly in 1999, the President of El Salvador, Francisco Flores Perez, said:

"We also express our concern that so many years have gone by, and that the matter of setting up operational machinery to promote peace among nations has so often come before the Security Council without any resolution. It is a paradox that, as we speak of concord for the next millennium, we have been unable to reach agreement on this matter. This weakens all, it weakens the United Nations. It is a betrayal of the beliefs of all the nations that want the Organization to participate actively in promoting peace." (*A/54/PV.15, p.5*)

Thus also, Ms. Maria Eugenia Brizuela de Avila, our Minister for Foreign Affairs, said in her statement in the general debate at this session,

"for my Government it is matter of concern that after seven years of negotiations we have not made progress on the substantive points related to the category, number and privileges of new members, as well as on the question of the veto, which is currently an exclusive privilege of the permanent members.

"The differences and the inflexible positions we have seen are unacceptable because they create a situation which, in our view, contributes to the lack of credibility and a loss of confidence in the system of collective security. It is urgent and we cannot postpone overcoming our differences and granting each other concessions so that we can reach a general, fair and equitable agreement in order to achieve the aims of the reform". (*A/55/PV.19, p.17*)

The Millennium Summit, which brought together the greatest number of heads of State or Government in history, examined the global problems facing mankind and concluded with the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, in which world leaders undertook to spare no effort in strengthening the United Nations and within it

"To intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects." (*resolution 55/2, Millennium Declaration, para. 30*)

This commitment gave us reason to hope that there would finally be an understanding of the need and importance of strengthening the Organization and of ensuring that its operation would be more democratic and transparent so that the noble and humane ideals that inspired the creation of the United Nations — the promotion of peace, human rights, friendly relations and economic and social progress as a function of the common interest of the peoples — would become a reality.

Encouraged by the positive spirit of the results of the Summit, we expressed confidence that the commitments undertaken would be backed by political will that would allow us to implement the recommendations and decisions contained in the Declaration, especially those that relate to the subject we are discussing.

Having arrived at this point, permit me to reaffirm the essential points of El Salvador's position in connection with the reform of the Security Council.

First, El Salvador shares the view that it is urgent and indispensable to reform the Security Council to make it more democratic, representative and transparent.

Secondly, the reform of the Security Council must be comprehensive, taking into account the different substantive aspects on which we have so far achieved no agreement.

Thirdly, for the reform to be viable, it must be the result of a general agreement, as indicated in resolution 48/26 of 1993.

Fourthly, El Salvador supports the position that the number of permanent and non-permanent members should be increased; so that both industrialized and developing countries should be included; that the number of new members should be representative of the political and economic structure of the world at present, as well as of the present number of Members of the Organization; that the new members, in each category should have the same rights that the Charter confers on the present members in the same category; that the use of the veto privilege should be limited to Chapter VII issues and should gradually be eliminated; and that the new members should be chosen pursuant to the principle of equitable geographic distribution.

As regards the procedure for seeking and reaching a general agreement, El Salvador believes that efforts should be continued in the Working Group established by the General Assembly. While we do not agree with the setting of deadlines, due to the complexity and the politically sensitive nature of the issue, neither do we believe that it is appropriate to go on meeting indefinitely, both because of the financial

implications and because reality might continue to demonstrate the difficulty, or even impossibility, of achieving that general agreement.

In conclusion, I should like to recall something else that the Minister for Foreign Affairs of El Salvador said in the general debate of the Millennium Assembly:

> "the Millennium Summit and the Millennium Assembly are historic events that could mark the beginning of a new era in the international order ... Hence, it is imperative that the commitments which we have made become a reality ... From a realistic point of view they require the decisive support of the developed world". (*A/55/PV.19, pp. 18-19*)

For this reason El Salvador calls for efforts that show the necessary political will and flexibility that will allow us to advance in the reform of the Council. This would be a step towards the establishment of a new international alliance of solidarity, fairness and equitability, which will in turn lead us to the establishment of a new era in international relations.

Mr. Čalovski (the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): The views of the Republic of Macedonia on the reform of the Security Council have been stated in the plenary and in the Working Group. The last instance was when our Foreign Minister spoke during the general debate at this session. Our positions have not changed — they remain the same. I am therefore not going to discuss them again today. We will do that, as appropriate, at the meetings of the Working Group next year.

I am taking the floor to elaborate briefly on one aspect of the reform of the Security Council that is important to my delegation and, I am sure to other delegations as well. It concerns the reason why our efforts in the Working Group thus far have not moved the reform process of the Security Council forward as much as was expected and desired. Of course, there are many reasons. But one, in our view, is very important.

In our view, United Nations reform should be seen as a reform of all its principal organs, not only of the Secretariat and the Security Council, but also of the Economic and Social Council and of the General Assembly. The main goal of United Nations reform — to strengthen the role of the Organization and to make it truly relevant — cannot be achieved with partial reforms or with technical and cosmetic reforms. The reforms should be substantial and comprehensive and should involve all principal organs in order to be successful.

It is very important, in this regard, that the heads of State or Government reaffirmed in the Millennium Declaration the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations and that it should be enabled to play that role effectively. They also, asked that efforts be intensified to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects.

In our view, if we want to make progress in our future endeavours to reform the Security Council, we must also make progress in reforming the General Assembly. Of course, in order to do that we need to have the political will and readiness of Member States, and we have to observe the division of labour between the Security Council and the General Assembly set out in the Charter, while respecting the spirit and the letter of the Charter. Our view, which is shared by other delegations, is that the Security Council should strengthen its role as the executive organ of our Organization in the maintenance of international peace and security. Deliberative and policy-making tasks and functions should be left to the General Assembly. In a word, the objective of our efforts should be to strengthen the role and relevance of both principal organs of our Organization. Those efforts should therefore parallel each other and be made at the same time.

We will improve the role and the relevance of our Organization if our efforts to strengthen the Security Council avoid marginalizing of the General Assembly. Our preference therefore is for the efforts aimed at advancing the Security Council reform to parallel a simultaneous endeavour to advance General Assembly reform. That can be done by starting a process to adopt new arrangements for the work of the General Assembly under which the Assembly would carry out its work year-round. The adoption of new arrangements for the work of the General Assembly will result in abolishing numerous subsidiary bodies of the principle organs of our Organization in which the majority of Member States cannot now effectively participate, which are costly and whose results are not satisfactory. This is particularly important due to the fact that only a few Member States can be members of the Security Council and that the representative organ of the United

Nations is the General Assembly, in which all Member States participate.

We look forward to useful and positive work in the Working Group next year, and we hope that the existing differences stemming from disagreements and political realities can be narrowed. The implementation of the Millennium Declaration should guide our work. The present political reality favours democratization of the Council, increasing its membership and adopting a common position on the interpretation of Articles 27 and 24 of the Charter. We are optimistic that the Group will be able to record further progress in making the work of the Council more transparent and in improving its working methods. In that regard, we note with appreciation the willingness of the Council to follow the suggestions made in the Working Group.

It should be clear from what I have said that I believe that the bigger problem of our Organization is the current functioning of the General Assembly. One could argue successfully that the functioning of the Security Council at present is satisfactory and, in many ways, better than one might expect. The effort to reform the Council should therefore be seen as a desire of the membership for it to function even better, while taking into account the political realities of the current international situation, the future development of international cooperation and, of course, the provisions of the Charter of our Organization.

As I end this brief statement, let me express the great satisfaction of my delegation over the way the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group — Minister Gurirab, Ambassador Dahlgren and Ambassador de Saram — have discharged their important duties. We thank them and express our deep appreciation to them.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, Mr. President, I wish to express our appreciation for the work carried out by your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, the Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform. Likewise, I wish to thank the Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassadors Dahlgren and de Saram. I extend our gratitude to them for their preparation of this year's report of the Working Group, which included general observations and many important elements that merit our objective consideration.

The report of the Open-ended Working Group reflects the great divergence of opinion that exists with regard to the elements of reform. Nevertheless, the delegation of Sudan believes that the Working Group continues to be the appropriate framework to bring about the necessary reform of the Security Council on the basis of General Assembly resolution 48/26, of 3 December 1993. The report presented today constitutes a sound foundation for the continuation of discussions among Member States on the issues of expanding the membership of the Council and reforming its methods of work.

The Millennium Summit Declaration calls for intensified efforts to bring about comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects in order to make it more representative and effective. That call reflects the importance attached by the world's leaders to this vital issue and to promoting the role and function of the Security Council so that it represents all members of the Organization in an equitable manner.

Today, there has been a huge increase in the membership of the United Nations, particularly from developing nations. However, there still has not been reform of the Council to reflect that increase in membership, not to mention the ongoing changes in international relations — changes that we believe necessitate carrying out reform aimed at improving the capability of the Organization to maintain international peace and security.

I would like to reaffirm Sudan's commitment to the position expressed by the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group with regard to Security Council expansion and the reform of its working methods. That position was set out in the concluding documents of the Non-Aligned Movement Summit conference at Durban and at the Organization of African Unity (OAU) summits held at Harare and Algiers, and called for granting Africa two permanent seats, and two non-permanent seats to be assigned on the basis of a rotation to be determined by the OAU.

The report of the Open-ended Working Group reflects a consensus on Security Council reform. Such reform must encompass an increase in the membership and improvements in the Council's working methods. It is regrettable that, after seven years, the Working Group has been unable thus far to agree on the size of an expanded Security Council or on the question of the

veto, owing to differences among Member States on those issues.

The report of the Working Group reflects interaction between the Group and the Security Council, which has resulted in progress and in improvements in some of the Council's working methods, particularly with respect to transparency and the holding of open meetings. We welcome those developments and are hopeful that the Council will continue to improve its working methods and its decision-making process with a view to achieving the greatest possible transparency in its work. Here we reaffirm the Working Group's conclusion that reform should take into account equitable representation on the Security Council, increased effectiveness and an improved decision-making process, which are integral parts of cluster I. We wish also to underscore that the Security Council should not intrude upon the areas of competence of other United Nations organs, such as the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

The maintenance of the right of veto for permanent members of the Security Council runs counter to the Charter principle of the equal sovereignty of States, and to the most basic principles of democracy on which the United Nations was founded. The veto should not continue in an Organization that represents all the world's peoples. The delegation of the Sudan has said in the Working Group that it is a matter of principle that the veto should be abolished, and it supports the position of the Non-Aligned Movement that the use of the veto should be limited to Chapter VII action. The fact is that in today's Security Council, a super-Power continues to threaten the use of the veto on important issues before the Council, taking no account of the interests of the United Nations or of the views of regional groups in the Security Council, even though the Council is responsible for maintaining collective security. The Council appears to serve a small elite group rather than the membership at large.

We echo the position expressed by the great majority of Member States in rejecting attempts to impose a time-limit or a quick fix in Security Council reform and attempts to replace the present agreed negotiating mechanism. We agree with the Working Group's assessment that work has been slow on cluster I issues, but we believe that reform is a very difficult process requiring patience and perseverance in order to achieve results that will be satisfactory to all Member States and that will ensure a bright future for the United Nations, with whose lofty principles we all agree.

Mr. Stanislaus (Grenada): In the seven years of marathon debate on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters, everything that should be said has been said, but not everyone has said it. Therefore, for the record, the Grenada delegation, for the very first time in the seven-year debate, will make a few remarks on the need to reform the Security Council, the formula for which is as intricate as quantum physics. In speaking these few words, I am guided by the following admonition: let thy speech be short, comprehending much in few words, for sometimes speech is nothing more than a device to say nothing.

My delegation subscribes in large measure to what was said during the Millennium Summit by our heads of State or Government and subsequently during the general debate of the current Millennium Assembly. Additionally, my delegation concurs with the statements by the Non-Aligned Movement and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), plus what our foreign ministers said only recently during their meeting in Japan.

The common thread in all statements made at whatever level, including those of the Secretary-General and of your good self, Mr. President, is that the Security Council needs reforming. The words "anachronistic", "arcane", "unrepresentative", "unrealistic" and "antiquated" have been used frequently to stress the need for reform of the Security Council. There is general agreement in respect of the *modus vivendi*, that is, the need to reform the Council. What is at stake is the *modus operandi*: the elusive formula to accomplish the reform, especially when dealing with the two categories of membership, the permanent and the non-permanent.

Change or reform does not come easily even when it is for the common good. In the case of the permanent members, consider whether some members of the Security Council are not actuated more by a wish to wield power than by a wish to share power with others. "Power concedes nothing. It never has and never will", according to the great nineteenth-century African-American abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

Power, access and influence go hand in hand and are not easily relinquished.

When increasing the permanent membership of the Council, the following considerations arise: by how many should its number increase, and what is the optimal number? Which States will qualify for membership? What formula will be applied? Will all members be equal or will some be more equal than others? Will this be a case of *primus inter pares* — first among equals? Will the veto power be abolished? Or will only some exercise that right, which bears an uncomfortable resemblance to the ancient and abominable practice of the divine right of kings?

Next, let us look at an increase in the non-permanent membership, and we find that the first two considerations I set out a moment ago loom large, in addition of course to the complicating formula that will be posed by the presence of five regional groups.

In pursuit of this elusive formula for the reform of the Security Council, there are some who believe that the best approach is the holistic one — that is, to tackle both categories, permanent and non-permanent, at the same time, difficult as it might seem. This brings to mind the oft-repeated saying that the difficult things you do right away, the impossible will take longer. Similarly, there are others who advise that reforming the non-permanent category first will present less of a problem. In short, do not wait to do everything before doing something. The solution may very well lie between these two views, if we have the political will to reason together.

Finally, one of the few certainties in this uncertain life is the certainty of change, which is inevitable and, when it is positive, desirable. In that case change must be embraced, not feared. But the dynamics of change are usually manifested in the following ways: first doubt, then resistance and, finally, acceptance. This makes us optimistic, the difficulties notwithstanding, that before too long we will all see the wisdom of bringing not only the Security Council, but also other organs of the United Nations, as needed, into the twenty-first century.

The original 51 Members, that formed the United Nations in 1945 expect no less from the 189 Members in the year 2000 with respect to managing change for the good of our Organization.

Mr. Gounaris (Greece): I would like first of all, Mr. President, to thank your predecessor, the Foreign Minister of Namibia, His Excellency Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group, and his two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador John de Saram of Sri Lanka and Ambassador Hans Dahlgren of Sweden, for their excellent work and guidance in the Working Group this past session.

The Millennium Summit reaffirmed the resolve of our heads of State or Government to spare no effort in making the United Nations a more effective instrument for pursuing a more prosperous, just and peaceful world. In this regard, they stressed, among other things, their resolve to intensify their efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects.

Greece believes that it is necessary to strengthen the position and the role of the main organs of the United Nations. The Security Council, in particular, needs comprehensive reform to become more representative and more effective.

As the Greek Prime Minister stressed during the Millennium Summit, the Security Council, in its long history and involvement in international affairs, has demonstrated that its inability to solve problems of magnitude is due both to its structural deficiencies, which date back to its institutional inception, and to the unwillingness of the Member States of the United Nations to give it room to become effectively involved in matters where State sovereignty and vital interests are considered to override international concerns. It is self-evident that all Security Council resolutions must be implemented.

The reform of the Council in both its shape and decision-making process, as well as in its working methods, should be guided by democratic principles and reflect current realities. The Security Council should be more transparent, democratic, representative and accountable. Greece firmly believes that the Security Council should reflect the current global realities and be more representative of the membership of the United Nations today. The reform must take into account the new political and economic situations and ensure better geographic representation, as well as proper balance among developed and developing countries.

The Greek delegation, like others [illegible] have spoken before, supports a more representati[illegible] Council

and therefore its expansion. Only in this way can the Council respond adequately to the current needs of the international community, which have changed since the adoption of the Charter in 1945. But expansion and other aspects of reform of the Security Council should be integral parts of a common package. The reform and expansion of the Security Council should not harm its effectiveness and efficiency. Greece believes that any enlargement of the membership of the Council must not diminish the possibility for all States to serve. It is essential that a future Council should reflect Article 2, paragraph 1, of the United Nations Charter, which establishes the sovereign equality of Member States.

The principle of sovereign equality and the democratic principle are interlinked, and they are best served if a periodic participation of States — big, medium and small — takes place. It is obvious that if a country that is willing and able to serve effectively becomes a Council Member once every 50 years, these principles are not served.

A reform of the decision-making process so that the Council will be more democratic, is important. Greece favours a review of the decision-making process. This is a very sensitive issue, but, as it goes together with all other aspects of reform, it should be addressed. A comprehensive reform package should also explore new avenues aiming at realistic, functional and democratic decision-making.

A more accountable, expanded Security Council should undergo a periodic review. Greece supports the periodic review that would provide re-examination by the General Assembly of decisions taken in all aspects of reform in the Council. This mechanism would enable the Security Council to adjust periodically to the changes and needs of the international community.

The examination of the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council reflects significant progress and increasing transparency in its functioning, and we welcome the implementation by the Council of many of the Working Group's proposals.

Much has been achieved on the cluster II issues in the Open-ended Working Group. We consider that a clear improvement has taken place in this area, and the Security Council is more open to the General Assembly and the general membership. We would also like to stress the importance of Article 31 of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, on the participation of non-members in meetings of the Security Council and informal consultations of the whole; the meetings of the Security Council in accordance with Articles 35 and 39 of the Charter; the meetings with troop-contributing countries and other contributors to peacekeeping operations; and the briefings by the President of the Security Council to non-members. All of these steps improve the transparency of the work of the Security Council.

Of course, the working methods of the Council must be improved, and we welcome any steps to upgrade them. In this regard, we support transparent consultation procedures. We agree with other delegations that more extensive reforms are necessary with respect to peacekeeping missions. The non-members of the Security Council and the parties to the dispute should be provided with broader opportunities to participate in the deliberations of the Council and influence its decisions.

We believe that the Members of the United Nations, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, are in favour of change, in favour of expansion of the membership of the Security Council, in favour of a Security Council that is more transparent, democratic, representative and accountable, a Security Council with more authority and enhanced effectiveness. Thus, the United Nations will be a more effective instrument for pursuing all priorities set out in the Millennium Declaration.

Mr. Adiniwin (Marshall Islands): My Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Alvin Jacklick, conveys his best wishes and his congratulations on your astute and able guidance of the deliberations of this body. We have every confidence that your wisdom will continue to guide us through some of the challenging issues to be discussed and debated by the General Assembly during the remaining days of this historic session.

We are certainly encouraged by our discussions on the reform of the Security Council, given the continuous emphasis this body places on the unreserved application of democratic principles. The geopolitical landscape has changed dramatically since the signing of the Charter, with the membership quadrupling in the last 55 years. Numerous other countries, including developing countries such as the Marshall Islands, have joined the United Nations

family. Furthermore, while the main actors on the international scene in 1945 were Governments, today civil society and international agencies, as well as the private sector, are increasingly becoming active players on the world scene, even vying for equal partnerships in addressing global issues and challenges.

The Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands therefore supports appropriate reform measures and thus the expansion of the Security Council, through which the realities of today and the challenges of tomorrow can be better met. Our Government supports an increased Security Council membership in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. We strongly believe that expanding the membership of the Council should be based on the principle of equity and that more developed and developing countries should be included.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands wishes at this time to record its full support for the proposed permanent membership of Japan in an expanded Security Council. We deeply appreciate this opportunity to convey the official position of the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands on this important subject.

Mr. Hussein (Ethiopia): Seven years have passed since the General Assembly established an Open-ended Working Group to consider all aspects of the question of an increase of the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Council. However, despite the laudable efforts made, much remains to be done to accomplish the task of Security Council reform, as set out in General Assembly resolutions 47/62 and 48/26.

The positions of Member States individually and as groups remain far apart and highly polarized. New proposals and ideas continue to emerge, even at this stage, after seven years of deliberations.

The lack of adequate progress in the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group does not make the task of Security Council reform less urgent. On the contrary, the continued increase in the membership of the United Nations and the proliferation of conflicts which demand the attention of the Security Council make it an even more urgent task, requiring greater attention. Therefore, action — both in terms of expansion of the membership in both categories and of a meaningful reform of the working methods of the Council — should be pursued with greater vigour and a sense of urgency.

As resolution 48/26 provides, the expansion of the membership of the Council in both permanent and non-permanent seats should aim, first and foremost, to redress the existing imbalance in the representation of developing countries, whose membership in the United Nations has increased substantially. In this respect, Africa's representation should be addressed in accordance with the position taken by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Summit.

The question relating to the working methods of the Security Council and the transparency of its work should also be given equal attention in the reform process. In this respect, we note the various initiatives and measures taken by a number of Council members during their respective tenures in the presidency of the Council, introducing certain formats and methods of work. These measures, however, remain as individual initiatives, without continuity or institutionalization.

In order to effectively fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the United Nations Charter, the Security Council should, first and foremost, win the trust and confidence of the United Nations Members, which, as stipulated in Article 24 of the Charter, confer on it the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties the Council acts on their behalf.

To this end, the current practice of decision-making — surrounded by secrecy and characterized by closed meetings and informal consultations — requires immediate and substantial reform and change. The Security Council should adopt more transparent methods of work in conducting its meetings and in decision-making. The Council's meetings should, as a general rule, be held in a public format, open to all States Members of the United Nations. Informal consultations and private meetings, or so-called open briefings — which are not, in fact, open — should not be the rule, but the exception. The Security Council should scrupulously implement Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter, as well as rules 37 and 38 of its provisional rules of procedure, by ensuring the participation in its meetings, including in informal ones, of States, especially those States parties to a dispute under consideration by the Security Council.

Inclusiveness, accountability, transparency and democratization, which have become the yardstick by

which the legitimacy of national Governments and their policies is judged, should not be ignored or resisted in the international system, especially in the makeup and functioning of all United Nations organs — including the Security Council — which, after all, are founded on the principle of the sovereign equality of all of its members.

As a founding Member with a principled commitment to the collective security system of the United Nations, Ethiopia considers the reform of the Security Council urgent and essential. Such reform should be undertaken in a manner that reflects both the realities of our time and the basic purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, especially the principle of the sovereign equality of all Member States. With this in mind, Ethiopia pledges to continue its participation in the efforts to achieve this objective.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation recalls with satisfaction that, in the course of the Millennium Summit, the leaders of Member States confirmed their resolve to intensify efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council. This reflects the special significance that the world community attaches to strengthening the role of the Security Council as the principal organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace. There can be no artificial haste in a matter so important to the future of the United Nations system as a whole.

Russia's position on this issue is a consistent and principled one. We proceed from the premise that the enhanced effectiveness and authority of the Security Council in world affairs should be the final goal of its reform. Otherwise, the Security Council would simply be unable to react promptly to acute threats to regional and global stability.

We reaffirm the importance of maintaining a compact Security Council. We consider it of prime importance that the renewed Council be a representative and balanced organ through the inclusion of new members, from industrially developed countries and influential developing States alike, pursuing independent foreign policies. Without that, it would be impossible in the Council to strike the necessary balance of power reflecting the tasks of building a multipolar world. In this context, the Russian Federation considers India, for instance, to be a strong and worthy candidate for permanent membership in the Security Council should it be decided to enlarge the Council in both categories.

It is important patiently to bridge the gap between the United Nations Member States and to expand the area of agreement, including on the key issue of the potential composition of the Security Council. The issue of categories in which that organ should be enlarged — whether this can be accomplished by adding new members, permanent and non-permanent alike, or through an increase in the number of non-permanent members only — remains one of the major stumbling blocks in the search for an optimum formula for the renewal of the Council. On this issue, our position is flexible and we are ready to support any commonly accepted decision to that end. We believe that such an approach is particularly conducive to establishing an atmosphere in which agreement can be achieved and has advantages over enforcing the positions of some to the detriment of the interests of others.

The preservation of the prerogatives and powers of the current Security Council permanent members, including their veto right, is an issue of principle to us. The veto is not a privilege, but a serious factor for ensuring consensus and the effectiveness of Security Council decisions. The veto is the backbone of the coherent work of the Council and a guarantee against arbitrary unilateral actions that run counter to the interests of the United Nations Members on whose behalf the Council acts. Any attacks against this institution are counterproductive and only mislead the United Nations Members without contributing to the success of Security Council reform.

We cannot ignore the criticism occasionally addressed to the permanent members, blaming the five for the sluggishness of the reform process. In our opinion, the answer to these unsubstantiated attacks was given in a politically important statement, issued on 7 September on behalf of the heads of State and Government of the five permanent members, whereby the commitment to fostering a more transparent and broadly representative Security Council in order to enhance its effectiveness was reaffirmed.

During the past year, the Council has done a great deal to improve its working methods and procedures. We expect that, in its further consideration of the cluster II issues, the Open-ended Working Group of the

General Assembly will continue to take a pragmatic and phased approach. There is a need for an adequate appraisal of measures that have already been put into practice and for joint efforts to increase their output. Procedural recommendations suggested by the Working Group should primarily serve the goals of enhanced effectiveness of the Council.

It is crucial that the final formula of the Security Council enlargement be based on the broadest possible agreement, preferably consensus, including the support of the incumbent permanent members of the Council.

There is a need for agreement on all aspects of Security Council reform, as required of us by the Millennium Declaration. We believe that the process of renewing the Security Council, in the context of overall United Nations reform, should not result in division, but rather forge greater unity among the Members of the Organization in a rapidly changing world. To that end, it is necessary to proceed with comprehensive negotiations within the Open-ended Working Group as the main United Nations forum in which to consider Security Council reform. Russia is prepared to make a further active contribution to this important matter.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): After seven years of deliberations within the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council, the General Assembly has the right to make a comprehensive review of the Working Group's achievements. The Member States wish to offer their views on the steps to be taken in the future.

The participation of more than 110 States in the deliberations manifestly reflects the importance that the international community attaches to Security Council reform, which should follow, not oppose, the trends of history. The tides of history are shifting from the rule of the elite to the rule of the majority — democracy — from the privilege to equality, from the rule of might to the rule of law.

One influence on the work of the Working Group in the past two years has been the exaggerated attention it has given to cluster I issues and the expansion of Security Council membership at the expense of cluster II issues on its working methods and decision-making process. The perpetuation of this trend will undermine the mandate entrusted to the Working Group by the General Assembly. My delegation warns against this tendency and calls for a restoration of balance in the work of the Working Group. While important, expanding the membership of the Council to safeguard equitable representation does not embody the reform we all seek. The Security Council was expanded in 1963 without any basic change in its working methods. Expansion is necessary, provided that it be an integral part of a general process to rectify the current imbalances in the Council's working methods, which must be improved and democratized.

Reform in the working methods of the Council is more urgent today than ever before, since the Council's credibility and legitimacy are at an all-time low. Selectivity, double standards and the dictatorship of one super-Power have become standard features of the Council. Examples of these double standards and the dictatorship of one super-Power are innumerable and include the genocide perpetrated by the Security Council against the Iraqi people through the imposition of comprehensive sanctions against them, as well as the sanctions imposed against Libya by reason of suspicion and against the Sudan on similarly flimsy bases.

At the same time, the Council completely ignores flagrant violations of the Charter committed by the military forces of the United States and the United Kingdom, both in the daily continuous bombardment of Iraq and the bombardment of Libya and Sudan by American missiles and aircraft.

We can see good examples of such double standards daily on our television screens. For the last two months, the Zionist invading and occupying forces have used tanks and aircraft to bombard occupied Palestinian towns and villages, and the Council has done absolutely nothing because the United States is threatening to use its veto power against any resolution that condemns the aggressor and halts the aggression. This is occurring at a time when the Council has responded immediately and decisively when some militia groups in East Timor attacked some civilians.

Reforming the Security Council's working methods and decision-making process is the best way to restore credibility and legitimacy to the Security Council. I would like to mention some aspects of reform that the Working Group should concentrate on in its forthcoming discussions.

First, the Working Group should concentrate on abolishing the veto, since it is non-democratic and contradicts the principles of sovereign equality of

States and of justice, and it does not help in the maintenance of international peace and security. Any attempt to reform the Council without the abolition of the right of veto is not considered reform at all.

Secondly, the Working Group should concentrate on the implementation of Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter, allowing the parties in a conflict to participate in the Council's consultations and to have their points of view heard. Resolutions adopted by the Council in the absence of those concerned, whose destinies are determined by the Council, due to conditions of pressure and hegemony, have no credibility or legitimacy.

Thirdly, experience has proved, especially during the last 10 years, that the text of the Charter on the Council's mandates and competence is too general, in particular regarding those mandates designated in Chapter VII. This affords the opportunity for their abuse and the changing of measures in Chapter VII for the service of the private policies of the influential States in the Council. I will give two examples. Article 41 of the Charter states:

> "The Security Council may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions".

This text does not determine the exact nature of the measures, their scope or their relevance to other Articles of the Charter. It looks like a blank cheque. As a result, the United States has exploited this generalization in the text and has imposed, on behalf of the Security Council, comprehensive sanctions against Iraq. This example contradicts in letter and in spirit the Charter of the United Nations. The sanctions contradict international humanitarian law and the rules of human rights. This has been emphasized in reports of many international circles, most recent of which in the report of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights at its fifty-second session, held in Geneva from 31 July to 18 August 2000.

In order to stop the abuse of this text, we must transform all the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and its subsidiary organs — particularly resolution 51/242 and the resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights, which contain guidelines to be followed when imposing sanctions — into mandatory rules that govern work under Article 41 of the Charter and prevent its abuse.

My second example relates to Article 42 of the Charter, which states that the Council

> "may take such action by air, sea or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security."

Here once again the United States and its ally, the United Kingdom, have taken the generalization in this Article out of context. The United States has directed its military machine to destroy the infrastructure of Iraq — including factories, farms, roads, schools, bridges, hospitals, mosques and churches — in a vendetta unprecedented in history. The former Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, reported as follows to the Security Council on 20 March 1991 after his visit to Iraq as head of the mission to assess the humanitarian needs of Iraq:

> "It should, however, be said at once that nothing that we had seen or read had quite prepared us for the particular form of devastation which has now befallen the country. The recent conflict has wrought near-apocalyptic results upon the economic infrastructure of what had been, until January 1991, a rather highly urbanized and mechanized society. Now, most means of modern life support have been destroyed or rendered tenuous. Iraq has, for some time to come, been relegated to a pre-industrial age, but with all the disabilities of post-industrial dependency on an intensive use of energy and technology." (*S/22366, para.8*)

The United States and the United Kingdom have used in this aggression against Iraq more than 300 tons of depleted uranium munitions, radioactive weapons classified as weapons of mass destruction, leading to an environmental and health catastrophe. They have not given the United Nations any explanation for their wide devastation of Iraq's infrastructure or their reason for using depleted uranium, under the guise of the authorization mentioned in Article 42 of the Charter. Therefore, the United Nations should adopt additional guidelines governing the application of Article 42 and prevent its use for vindictive purposes or for further implementing special destructive policies. We also call for compensation for countries that have been adversely affected by this abuse.

Fourthly, the Working Group should concentrate on adopting measures that would hold the Council accountable before the general membership of the

United Nations, represented in the General Assembly, to make sure that the Council's measures and resolutions are adopted in accordance with upholding the Charter. Member States of the United Nations have the right to hold the Council accountable, having mandated in Article 24 of the Charter that the Council will act on their behalf. Therefore, they have the right to decide whether the Council is honest in this authorization. The general membership also finds it necessary to give individual States the right to hold the Council accountable before the International Court of Justice if a certain State believes that the Council has been unfair to it.

Fifthly, the Working Group should concentrate on reforming the working methods of the sanctions committees and on making them more democratic and transparent. It should work to put an end to consensus as a means of taking decisions in the sanctions committees, which means virtually giving the 15 members of the committees the right of veto. In his testimony, given on 14 November 2000 before the Working Group on Security Council sanctions, a former Chairman of the sanctions Committee against Iraq said the following:

> "One of the shortcomings of the sanctions Committee is the right of veto, which almost all members of the Committee enjoy. I remember how one of the members prevented Iraq from having photographic film that was to be used under the supervision of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to document losses from Iraqi museums. In Iraq's opinion and in UNESCO's opinion, this project was 'ery important for restoring Iraqi cultural property to Iraq. But it was not considered humanitarian enough from the point of view of the Committee."

He added,

> "The principle of consensus is not mentioned in the Charter, and we have to cease working according to it."

We must give the sanctions-targeted States and third parties that suffer their adverse impacts the right to their viewpoints. I say this because the Iraqi delegation has made several applications to the sanctions Committee on Iraq to attend its meetings. The United States representative suspended Iraq's application, as he has suspended thousands of contracts for pharmaceuticals and humanitarian materials needed by the Iraqi people and paid for by Iraq, using the pretext of dual usage.

Sixth, the Council should stop interfering in issues that do not fall within its competence and must stop controlling the competencies of other United Nations organs. A precise description of the Council's competence and mandate must be adopted.

Seventh, a set of measures that cover all the Council's activities and that ensure the implementation of the Charter's provisions, including Article 31 and Article 32 of the Charter, must be adopted.

Finally, the role of the General Assembly in issues concerning the maintenance of international peace and security, pursuant to Article 10 and Article 11 of the Charter, must be activated, as must the role of the Secretary-General, pursuant to Article 99 of the Charter.

When we reform the Council's working methods and decision-making procedures and determine its relationship with the other United Nations organs properly, Council membership, permanent or non-permanent, will then become an entrustment of service to the international community and not an empty honour. When it becomes impossible to use the Council's mechanisms to serve the individual policies of Member States, then we will see an end to the rush to become a Council member. Some States will no longer have electoral bodies to deliver them a seat to the Council, and the General Assembly Hall will not resemble the stock exchange.

Will new permanent members be elected to the Security Council shortly? Yes, this will happen if we make the United Nations and a global village where peace and justice reign one of our main priorities.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): I would like at the outset to say how happy my delegation is that you, Mr. President, will be presiding once again over the Open-ended Working Group responsible for studying the reform of the Security Council. Your outstanding diplomatic skills will be very useful to all in the work of the Working Group, which, under your predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, and the Vice-Chairmen, our colleagues from Sweden and Sri Lanka, made definite progress.

I wish also to pay a warm tribute to all the members that participated in the meetings of the

Working Group. Since its creation, that Group has been able to make everyone accept the need to meet the aspirations of all States to participate fully in the Security Council and in the management of international affairs and, therefore, of the need for the reform of the composition of the Security Council and its working methods.

Today there is general agreement on the question of expanding the Security Council's two membership categories in such as way as to respond to the aspirations of all States to participate in managing world affairs and to reflect the new geopolitical composition of our Organization. There is also general agreement on the need for the Council to be more open to the entire United Nations membership when considering matters affecting international peace and security. In this vein, Cameroon welcomes the efforts made to achieve greater transparency in the Security Council's work through the daily briefings of the monthly President and the open and interactive debates on subjects of concern to the peoples of the United Nations.

However, much ground remains to be covered so that the Member States can agree on the scope of the Council's expansion and on the distribution of the new seats, in keeping with the principles of fairness and equitable representation. In fact, the question before us today is how Member States are to proceed towards reaching a final agreement on these crucial pending matters? This may take a long time or it may be done quickly. Of course, everything will depend on the political will we show to collectively manage the global challenges facing the international community at the beginning of the millennium.

Cameroon's positions on these issues are well known. They were recalled here on 20 December 1999, and they have not changed. At that time, we noted that the debate then on the Security Council reform was all the more important since it was called upon to illuminate the way for the Millennium Summit.

We are glad to note that the Summit succeeded, as could be seen in the strength of determination and commitment shown by the heads of State or Government of the world in deciding to manage planet Earth collectively. As a result of the commitment of the heads of State or Government to redouble their efforts to reform all aspects of the Security Council's procedures, the Millennium Summit gave the Working Group new momentum and new guidelines to make the Council — instead of the not-very-well-liked principal organ of the United Nations — an organ that exercises its responsibilities effectively because it enjoys greater legitimacy in the eyes of the Member States.

Thus, we see the significance of this debate, which plunges us into the problems confronting the United Nations a few months into the new millennium. These problems were very well presented by the Secretary-General in his report to the Millennium Summit and Millennium Assembly. His question — what is the future role of the United Nations? — must concern the heads of State first and foremost, insofar as the United Nations can be only what we would like it to be, and it can play only the role we ask it to play — and only to the extent that we make resources available to it.

It was in this spirit that from this rostrum the head of State of Cameroon expressed the firm hope of seeing our Organization enjoy the renewed support of the States, not only in the form of resources, but also, above all, in the form of political will. To ask questions about the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century also means to raise questions about its principal organs. What role are these organs to play with respect to the challenges confronting us? What should their new composition be as they take up new tasks? Or, more exactly, what should their new composition be as they take up the Organization's existing tasks, the present status of which acutely disturbs our conscience? This is what gives the current debate its greatest significance.

As regards the Security Council, the question is what kind of Council we, the Member States, want to give the United Nations, which the people have entrusted with collective governance in the interest of all and of globalization?

Today's debate is also significant because it is taking place just after the Millennium Summit, an unprecedented event in the life of nations, an event that brought together more than 180 heads of State or Government of planet Earth. The Summit adopted an important declaration that we do not hesitate to describe as a "table of laws" given to the peoples of the United Nations by the leaders of this world.

New directives for the Working Group are expected to come out of this discussion, directives that can aid the Working Group in its search for the best

ways and means to make the Security Council an organ in which all the States of the world, in accordance with the wishes of the heads of State or Government, collectively govern by means of the principle of just and equitable geographical representation. How are we going to proceed in the Working Group in order to achieve this goal? That is precisely the question. It seems to us that more than ever we must adopt the attitude and approach that we have always advocated.

The peoples of the United Nations want to move forward together in this Security Council reform exercise, they want to walk together and not in opposing groups. The peoples of the United Nations want to move forward on the road to consensus and not on the road to a vote on these matters. It is our hope that those who govern the world and their representatives will always keep in mind this concern, which was affirmed by the visionaries in San Francisco and reaffirmed by the heads of State in their statements at the Millennium Summit.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 59.

Programme of work

The President: Before adjourning the meeting I would like to inform members of a change in the programme of work. Agenda item 43, "The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development", which was originally scheduled for Wednesday, 22 November 2000, will be postponed to a later date, to be announced.

The meeting rose at 7.30 p.m.